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MILITARY MEMOIR

OF

LIEUT.-COL. JAMES SKINNER, C.B.

FOR

MANY YEARS A DISTINGUISHED OFFICER COMMANDING A CORPS OF IRREGULAR CAVALRY IN THE SERVICE OF THE H. E. I. C.

INTERSPERSED WITH

NOTICES OF SEVERAL OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONAGES WHO DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN THE SERVICE OF THE NATIVE POWERS IN INDIA.

By J. BAILLIE FRASER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

"TRAVELS IN KHORASSAN, MESOPOTAMIA, AND KOURDISTAN," ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE career of a military adventurer can never be deficient in excitement; and that of JAMES SKINNER, the subject of this Memoir, a man universally known throughout India, and one who took so active a part in the most stirring events of our struggles in that country, can scarcely fail of fixing the attention of the British public; for how few of that public are not now more or less interested in India? We, therefore, believe that we are performing an acceptable service in laying before them the following work.

It may, indeed, be matter of surprise that, hitherto, so little has been done in bringing to view the many remarkable characters who, during the latter years of the past century and

the early ones of the present, figured in the struggles of that disturbed period. The noble and gallant leaders of the British forces in those exciting times have, it is true, had their biographers; and History has presented in her pages both their names and their deeds. But many there were, of secondary or still lower rank, whose feats, though merged in the great whole of which they made up the sum, were as brilliant for their extent as the more dazzling victories, and who yet are unknown beyond the limits of a despatch, or a notice in some little read and less-remembered work of the day; nay, even the brilliant actions of Lake and of Wellington — not the "Field-Marshal," but at that time the plain Major-General—of Stevenson, of Maxwell, or of Fraser, —how little are they now remembered, or even known, by the public of this day? And yet where shall we find victories more splendid in all their details, or more important in their consequences than those of Assaye, or Argaom, of Dehlee, or Lasswarrie, or of Deeg? or where more desperate and dazzling deeds of valour than the storms of

Gawilghur, of Ahmednughur, of Alleeghur, of Rampoorah, of Deeg, and many others? or the far less known and less brilliant, but not the less remarkable or less gallant, defence of Dehlee? But it is still the old tale—good service soon forgotten; we speak of the inferior ranks alone. Verily, well would he merit of his country and its brave defenders, who should collect and record, under one view, the various gallant and daring exploits performed by Indian officers and Indian soldiers.

Meantime, we shall endeavour to do our humble part, in sketching out, so far as materials are to be had, the military adventures of Colonel James Skinner. We regret to say that these are somewhat scanty. The principal part of this work is taken from a MS. placed in the hands of the writer by a son of the late Colonel, now a Captain in the service of his highness the Nizam. It is in the writing of a native, no doubt copied from the notes of the Colonel himself, who was in the habit of keeping a journal in Persian—or from his personal dictation; but it abounds in clerical

inaccuracies, which require one well acquainted with the subject to correct; and it seems to have been intended rather as a brief memorial of his early life and services, framed for some special purpose, than as a full account of his chequered life and adventures.

In the latter part, indeed, about the year 1824 all detail ceases; and it ends with an abruptness calculated greatly to disappoint the reader, and at a period long before the useful part of his life was over. In truth, Skinner, being far more a man of the sword than of the pen, was very ill qualified to furnish materials for a life. He could *tell* his story most graphically, but he could not write it; and had the many friends who have heard him narrate the striking incidents of his life, and describe the remarkable scenes of which he had been a witness, thought of noting down such communications at the time, no doubt they would have served to form a far more interesting narrative than the present. But few have the time or the precaution to avail themselves of such opportunities, and thus by far the most interesting

portion of many a public man's sayings and doings becomes lost to the public.

A brother of the writer of this—William Fraser, late of the H. E. I. C.'s civil service at Dehlee—was the most intimate friend that Skinner had. Though differing in some points of disposition, they were in many respects kindred spirits, especially in military enthusiasm, in their high sense of honour, and chivalrous generosity of spirit. The writer himself was also Skinner's intimate friend, though for a shorter period than his brother; but he had thus full opportunity of becoming acquainted not only with his character, but with much of his previous life, and he has thus been enabled, in some degree, to supply deficiencies in the MS. from his own recollections. In order, too, not only to render intelligible many of the facts and allusions which occur in the Memoir, but to add, as he hopes, to the interest of the work, the writer has been induced to preface it with a short, general sketch of the condition of the countries where the scene of the narrative lies, and to intersperse it with accounts

of the principal persons whose names or actions are introduced, but with whom many of his readers may possibly be little acquainted. In this way they will learn some particulars regarding the state of the Mahratta empire and its rulers in those times, as Sindea, and Holcar, and the Pindarree chief, Ameer Khan; and find sketches of several other adventurers who have flourished in Hindostan, as the celebrated General De Boigne, General Perron, George Thomas, General Martine, the infamous Soomroo, and his well-known Begum.

Nor could he refrain altogether from noticing some of the remarkable battles that have marked with blood the fair plains of India. Those between native powers are in many instances connected with the subject, and afford characteristic sketches of the various military castes and classes of that interesting country; while those in which the British were engaged can never, surely, want interest to British readers. But it may be objected that such notices and such sketches of the deeds of other days savour too much of book-

making, and tend rather to overlay than illustrate the principal subject of the work. The first assuredly is not the case. The great object throughout has been to interest the reader—and chiefly in its hero. There is not a scene it describes, nor an action it narrates, which does not, in the writer's belief, bring out some point of national or individual character connected with the chief personage of the narrative; and, in fact, amongst the mass of glowing and brilliant materials, which the necessary examination of the subject presented for selection, his object was rather to curtail than to add to those illustrations, which might have too greatly lengthened the work.

For the rest, the writer has sought but to represent James Skinner, such as he was in truth, a gallant soldier, a zealous officer, a steady friend, a worthy noble-minded man; and spite of his dark complexion, a true and loyal Briton. If he has failed, the fault is his alone, and lies not in the subject of this Memoir.

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CHAPTER I.

Introductory—The Mahrattas—Sivajee—Rise of the Mahratta power—Decline of the Moghul Empire—Invasion of Hindostan by the Doorannees—Battle of Paneeput—Madhajee Sindea—His escape from Paneeput—His rise to power—Rajepootanah and the Rajepoots—European Adventurers in India.

INDIA has in all ages been the birthplace, or the harvest-field, of military adventure. From the time of Mahmood Ghiznavee, nay, from that of Alexander himself, down to the days of Nadir and Ahmed Shah Abdallee, her fair cities and rich plains have been the prey of foreign conquerors or spoilers; and still, as each successive dynasty began to wane, there has arisen, amidst the disorders that preceded its fall, a crowd of lesser robbers—her own sons—who have sought to build

their fortunes out of the fragments of the crumbling empire, or to snatch at power or dominion in the troubled waters of its ebbing fortunes. Amongst those of native origin, in later days, are the Mahrattas and the Pindarrees; the former of whom, springing forth in the feeble age of the Moghul empire, arose, almost unchecked, to a very formidable height of power; while the latter, arrested by the arms of the British government, before they had advanced beyond the stage of reckless and sanguinary banditti, have been happily crushed for ever.

The Mahrattas, according to the excellent and valuable work of Mr. Grant Duff,* were inhabitants of Maharashtra, a division of the Indian Peninsula lying between the 16th and 22nd degrees of north latitude, and extending from the Sautpoorah range of hills on the north, to the Wyne Gunga, and Wurdah rivers on the east; from whence a waiving and irregular line to Goa confines it on the south-east, as does the Ocean on the west. Its people consisted of many tribes and nations, but all of the Hindoo religion, and divided, as in other parts of the peninsula, into

* History of the Mahrattas, by James Paul Duff, Esq., late Political Resident at Satarah. 3 vols.

the four principal castes of Brahmins, Chettries, Byse, and Sooders,—or those of the priests, the military, the commercial, and the cultivators.

In common with all other provinces of India, this country was overrun by the Mahomedans, in their various invasions; but its chiefs and inhabitants cherished an unceasing spirit of hatred and aversion to their conquerors, which on all suitable occasions broke out into open revolt. The first of their chiefs, however, who appears to have maintained a hostile attitude with effect for any considerable time, was Shahjee, father of the celebrated Sivajee, who may be regarded as the true founder of the Mahratta power.

Sivajee, long before the death of his father, had taken an active part against the Moghuls, and become their terror. His career, indeed, is one series of extraordinary exploits, which almost savour of romance, and would of themselves form a very interesting narrative; but on it we dare not enter. We must look forward to the death of his father, when he assumed the title of Rajah, and successfully opposed the great Aurungzebe, the last powerful monarch of the line of Timour. Sivajee died in 1680, at the early age of fifty-three, of a fever, caught by over exertion, and

was succeeded by Sumbajee, who, after an active reign of eight or nine years, was treacherously seized and put to death at Solapoor, sixteen miles north-east of Poona,* by Aurungzebe; an act which excited against him a still more implacable hatred on the part of the Mahrattas; while the death of that monarch himself, in 1707, removed the only support of the falling empire, and left the weakened Moghuls to the fury of their persevering and now very powerful enemies.

In the reign of his weak successor, Ferokhshere, their power rapidly augmented; and in the years 1719 and 1720 we find Ballajee Wishwanaut, the *Peishwa* (as the first minister of the Rajah of Satarah was called), and his Mahrattas, actually dictating terms in the city of Dehlee, and receiving—that is, forcing—from the prostrate shadow of an emperor, the three celebrated grants of the *Chout*, the *Sirdesmookee*, and *Sewraje*,—three imposts upon the six Soobahs of the Dekhan, amounting to many crores of rupees; and equivalent, in fact, to a surrender of nearly the whole revenue derived from these countries, to the Mahratta powers.

But even amongst that people themselves revo-

* History of the Mahrattas, vol. i. p. 360.

lutions were occurring which portended serious divisions. Bajee Rao, Peishwah, the successor of Ballajee in the office of minister to Rajah Shao, who now occupied the throne of Sivajee, was far too ambitious a character to rest satisfied with being the servant of a pageant—for the weak Rajah was little better,—and following the example set by many of the Moghul Soobahdars, usurped the real power, while using his master's name, and founded the dynasty recognised by us afterwards as that of the Peishwah, while the house of Satarah lapsed into the insignificance of a nominal authority. In fact Rajah Shao himself, after bestowing on Ballajee Bajee Rao grants that were equivalent to an acknowledgment of sovereignty, first sunk into mental imbecility, and then expired, amidst a multitude of intrigues concerning the succession, well worthy of a conclave of Mahratta Brahmins. Ballajee, however, was beforehand with them all; for, being on the watch, no sooner had the Rajah breathed his last than a body of his own horsemen dashed into Satarah, and seizing the intriguers, secured possession of the place, together with his own sovereignty, as virtual head of the Mahratta power.

To follow the intrigues, the feuds, the battles,

and the murders consequent on these events, and which succeeded each other for the next eight or nine years, is as foreign to our purpose as it would be uninteresting to the reader. But events were then in progress which forced all the Mahratta chiefs to suspend their private feuds, and unite for the general interest in repelling a foe who threatened their existence as a nation; nor could all their efforts succeed in averting a disaster from which it was long of recovering.

The invasion of India by Ahmed Shah Abdallee* is too well known to need description. His first expedition was in 1747. He returned home next year; but finding his officers driven from his acquisitions in the Punjab, he came back again in 1756, and overran both the Punjab and Moultaun, placing his son, Timour, as viceroy in these provinces; and rapidly proceeding eastward, reached and plundered both Dehlee and Muttra. His conquest would have been completed, and the Moghul dynasty destroyed before its time,

* He is indifferently called Abdallee, or Doorânnee, by historians: the latter name is derived from the word *Dur*, or *Door*, a "pearl," which was given him by a celebrated Fakeer, in compliment to his valour, and his followers thence are called Doorannees; they were all Affghans.

had not a pestilence broken out amongst his troops, which forced him to return to the more healthy regions of his own country. The Mahrattas, taking advantage of this absence, sent Rugonaut Rao to recover their lost ground; and that chief succeeded in driving the Affghan viceroy from the conquered provinces, and placing an officer of his own nation in charge of them at Lahore.

In the end of 1760, Ahmed Shah, furious at this affront, marched from Affghanistan with a very formidable army; and before Duttojee Sindea, and Holcar, who had been sent to reinforce the Mahratta force, could reach Lahore, the governor was driven from it, the whole Punjab re-occupied by the Dooranees, and the Shah, with a vast army, crossed the Jumna, defeating and cutting to pieces Duttojee and his party. For some time skirmishing went on, the Mahrattas being generally driven backwards and losing many men, till about the 1st of November both armies took up their positions and fortified their camps. The Mahratta encampment, which was surrounded by a deep ditch and ramparts, included the town of Paneeput, while the Shah encamped at four côs distant in their front, defending his camp by an enclosure or stockade of felled trees.

For more than two months the armies continued thus shut up, exhausting the country round of its provisions; but the Abdallee monarch was even a greater master of the foraging system of warfare than his opponents, Mahrattas though they were; and having once or twice fallen in with them, and severely cut up their foraging parties, the latter, afraid to encounter their enemies, kept close in camp, until want appeared there and produced murmurings and insubordinations. Skirmishes occurred daily, and some severe actions took place, with loss on both sides, but generally much to the disadvantage of the Mahrattas. Each day, too, the dearth increased in camp, till at length their distress became insufferable. "The cup," wrote the Bhow to Cassee Rao, Pundit, "is full to the brim—it will not hold a drop more:" to fight or to starve was the alternative, and to fight the Mahratta chiefs resolved. The result of this determination was the memorable battle of Paneeput; and, though scarcely in the direct line of our main subject, we think that few readers would forgive us if we passed over, without some description, one of the fiercest and most interesting conflicts that ever occurred on the blood-stained plains of India.

The Mahratta army consisted—from the best accounts—of 55,000 horse and 15,000 foot, with 200 pieces of cannon, besides a host of Pindarrees and followers, camel artillery, &c. amounting to at least 200,000 souls of all sorts. They formed two grand divisions, one under Sewdasheo Rao Bhow, cousin of the Peishwah, with whom was Wiswas Rao, that prince's son, and many of the chiefs of old families in the Dekhan. It numbered 22,000 chosen horse, besides 10,000 infantry, under Ibrahim Khan Gardee. Its equipment was the most splendid of any that had ever taken the field; and the spacious crimson tents with their gilded ornaments, the vast number of elephants with their gorgeous housings, the multitude of fine horses with their magnificent caparisons, the show of the silk and golden dresses of the officers, and the glitter of the armour, dazzled the eyes.

The other division was composed of the troops of Mulhar Rao Holcar, Dummajee Gaekwar, Junkajee, and Madhajee Sindea, and many other chiefs of note. There were also many parties of Rajepoot horse, and vast clouds of Pindarrees; and the well-known Surrije Mull, Rajah of the Jhâts, had come with 30,000 of his hardy troops.

But his experienced eye augured ill of the unwieldy mass of the Bhow's gay host, and he strongly advised that all the families and more heavy equipments of the army should be sent to Gwalior, so as to leave the fighting men less encumbered—a counsel as wisely given, as it was imprudently and haughtily rejected.

The Affghan army, on the other hand, numbered 41,000 horse, 38,000 foot, and 70 pieces of cannon. But these were chiefly Affghans, men of great bodily strength, without show or brilliancy—the steel was the only thing that glittered, and they were mounted on powerful horses, of the Toorki breed, naturally hardy, and rendered more so by continued exercise. These were accompanied by a vast cloud of irregulars, whose horses and arms were but little inferior to those of the Doorannees. To these advantages was added that of an able leader; for Ahmed Shah was a tried and experienced soldier, bred in the camp of the great Nadir, and who, as we learn from the best authors, saw everything himself, went daily the rounds of the vast camp, seldom riding less than thirty to forty côs, and who had his whole army in such discipline, that, says the same writer,*

* Cassi Rao, Pundit.—*Asiatic Researches*, vol. iii.

"his orders were obeyed like destiny—no man dared hesitate a moment in executing them."

Absolute want having forced the Bhow to fight —though, sensible of his danger, he tried negociation to the last—on the 6th of January 1761, orders were given to prepare for battle, and all the grain in the camp was distributed, that those who might never take another meal should have a full one now. On the following morning, before break of day, they marched out of their entrenchment in order of battle, and made straight for the Abdallee camp. But it was observed that their aspect was rather that of hopeless despair than of steady resolution. The ends of their turbans were loosened, and their hands and their faces stained with turmeric—a token that they went forth to die. Some of the chiefs consigned their wives and families to the care of friends who they hoped might survive the day.

When word was brought to the king that the Mahrattas were moving, he was asleep in his tent, but instantly mounting his horse, which was ready at the door, he rode forward a côs from his lines to reconnoitre, ordering the troops under arms as he went. Observing some of his Dooranees coming past loaded with plunder, his majesty

doubted the truth of the intelligence, but just then a general discharge of cannon from the Mahratta line convinced him of the fact, and taking from his mouth the Persian kaleoon he had been smoking, he turned to Shujah-u-dowlut, and said—"Your servant has told the truth, I see," and then ordered up his army, with the artillery in the front.

The battle began as usual among Asiatics with a general cannonade, during which the lines drew near each other. Ibrahim Khan Gardee, who was on the left Mahratta flank, advanced with Dummajee Gaekwar against the Rohillas on the right of the Doorannee line, covering his own left by throwing back two battalions obliquely, while Junkojee Sindea on the right opposed Shah Pussund Khan and Nujeeb-u-dowlut. The Bhow, with Jesswunt Rao Powâr, fronted the Grand Vizier, and the great *Bhugwa Jenda*, or Mahratta national standard, was raised in front.

When the two lines had outmarched their artillery, there arose the Mahratta war-cry—"Hur-hurree! hur-hurree!" and the battle became general, commencing with a furious charge from their centre upon the Grand Vizier's horse, which, not advancing to meet it, was broken

through by the Mahrattas, but not without many riders on both sides being dashed to the ground. A great dust arose, in the midst of which the combatants grappled for life or death, distinguishing each other only in the *melée* by the cries of their faith—"Deen! deen!" from the Mahomedans, and—"Hur! hur! mahdeo!" from the Mahratta host.

Ibrahim Khan, on the left, led his men with fixed bayonets against the Rohillas, who received him firmly, and fought hand to hand, but so steady was the charge of Ibrahim, that near eight thousand of the Rohillas lay dead or wounded, while he himself was wounded in several places, and six of his battalions were almost entirely ruined. Still he fought on, scattering his opponents, though Shah Verdee Khan, throwing himself from his horse, strove to rally his men, calling out—"Whither do you fly, my friends? our country is far off!" But the left wing of the Doorannee army was still unbroken, and the steady coolness of the Shah retrieved the day, which seemed for some time to be going against him. Gathering a body of Nassakchees* together, he ordered them to stop all the flyers, and kill

* Personal guards and executioners.

those who would not turn back, and to drive out all skulkers from the camp; then ordering the Grand Vizier with ten thousand men to make repeated charges on the Mahratta centre, he caused simultaneous charges to be made by the rallied troops on either flank. In these repeated attacks the physical weight and vigour of the Affghan men and horses at length had their effect; still, however, the Mahrattas fought valiantly, and the struggle, which had already endured for full seven hours, was continued for another hour, hand to hand, with spears, swords, battle-axes, and even daggers. But then a cloud came over the Mahratta host, which seems to rest still in mystery on this bloody field. About two in the afternoon, Wiswas Rao was mortally wounded; and the Bhow, descending from his elephant in order that the wounded youth should be placed there, is said to have sent a message to Holcar, "to do as he had been directed;" and then, mounting a fleet horse, he disappeared, and never was seen again. Holcar, on receiving this message, went off, it is said, immediately, followed by Dummajee Gaekwar; and in one moment, "as if by enchantment," all resistance on the part of the Mahrattas ceased,—they turned their backs

and fled, all became confusion and slaughter, and the battlefield was covered with heaps of dead. No quarter was given. Thousands were cut down in resisting, and fully more perished by suffocation in the ditch of the encampment. Men, women, and children, crowded into the town of Paneeput, where next day they were all butchered in cold blood. Even Junkojee Sindea and Ibrahim Khan Gardee,* wounded as they were, and high as was their rank, received no mercy,—such was the unsparing hatred of the Affghans, or the mean jealousy of their political enemies.

The body of Wiswas Rao was found on the field, and brought by command to be seen by Ahmed Shah. A headless trunk, supposed to be that of the Bhow, was also found some fifteen miles distant from the field, but whether it were or no, he never was heard of more; and if in any way he had been the cause of this disaster, he paid for his fault with his life. Many were the

* By Cassee Raja's account (3rd vol. Asiatic Researches), it would appear that Junkojee was murdered, partly to conceal his having been taken, and partly to gratify the private hatred of Nuzeeb-u-dowlut. Ibrahim Khan is said also to have died from ill treatment, or from having had poison put into his wounds while they were being dressed.

chiefs that fell, and few either of chiefs or men ever returned to their own country. Of the fighting men, it is thought that scarce a fourth survived the action; and it has been computed that not less than 200,000 Mahrattas perished in this campaign.*

It has often been remarked with what rapidity news travels in India, especially amongst the banking class; and a striking instance of the fact is recorded in the case of this battle. In the middle of January a cossid (or letter-carrier) who was engaged to reach Aurungabad in nine days from Paneeput, was met by the Peishwah's army crossing the Nerbudda, and mentioned that the Mahrattas had been defeated. He was brought before the Peishwah, and the letter in his charge opened. Its contents were simply these :—" Two pearls have been dissolved; twenty-seven gold mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up." These figurative words declared to the Peishwah the fate

* Those who wish to see a more particular and most interesting account of this disastrous battle, and the circumstances which preceded and followed it, may find one in the third volume of the Asiatic Researches: it is there stated that nearly 500,000 Mahrattas perished, first and last.

of Sewdasheo Rao, Wiswas Rao, the officers and their army.*

Amongst the few chiefs who escaped from this disastrous field was the afterwards celebrated Madhajee, the founder of the short-lived greatness of his family. When the route took place, being mounted on a fine Dekhanee mare, he soon cleared the crowd, and took his direction southward; but looking back, he perceived that he was still followed by one of the enemy who had at first pursued him—a huge Affghan, mounted on a great raw-boned Toorkoman horse. Spurring his Dekhanee, he soon left the Affghan behind, but upon pulling up again to breathe her, he saw his fierce enemy coming up at a long lumbering canter, and again he pushed on, but all was in vain—there was the fierce, persevering Affghan, with his big Toorkoman and heavy canter, at his heels. He now pushed on in earnest, and the chase is said to have lasted for an almost incredible time and space—even to the vicinity of Bhurtpore,

* See Grant Duff's History of the Mahrattas, vol. ii. p. 157. The rapidity with which intelligence, especially if evil, is transmitted is indeed wonderful. The death of General Gillespie, and the British failure before Kalunga, were known in the bazaar of Calcutta many days before the information reached Government.

when the Dekhanee mare, worn out, tumbled with its rider into a ditch; and the Affghan coming up, cut down the rider by a heavy stroke of his battle-axe upon the knee. He then stript his prey of his ornaments, his clothes, and his mare, and riding off, left him where he fell. A water-carrier, or, as some say, a washerman, named Rana or Rannee Khan, passing by with his bullock, found Madhajee in this state, and, ignorant of his rank, took him back to Bhurtpore, and attended him till he was recovered. Rana Khan then followed him to the Dekhan, where the chief gratefully rewarded the service done to the poor fugitive, and raised his deliverer, under the appellation of the *Bhaee*, or brother, to high command in his army. Madhajee was lamed for life by the wound, and, in telling the story afterwards, which he often did, he declared that for a long time he never could sleep without seeing the big eyes of the huge Affghan staring at him as he came galloping on upon his clumsy charger.

Madhajee was one of the four principal chiefs who rallied round the Peishwah after these disasters, and formed the heads of the Mahratta confederation. The others were Mulhâr Rao Holcar, afterwards nearly equally celebrated; the Gaek-

war, and Ragojee Bhouneslah. These chiefs, when a common danger made it their interest to act together, would, for so long, permit their personal enmities and political jealousies to lie dormant; but no sooner was the danger removed, by the discomfiture or weakness of their opponents, than their union was at an end, and each began recklessly to act for himself, and seek his own aggrandisement at all hazards—overrunning every country and district which was unable to resist their arms.

On the south, their encroachments were for a while arrested by the still formidable power of the Mahomedan sovereigns of Hydrabad and Mysore; while the progress of the English on the eastward rendered advance in that quarter uncertain and dangerous. It was only on the north they could extend their sway. They had already crossed the Chumbul as conquerors, and we have seen their officers in command at Lahore and Moultan. But recent misfortunes having driven them from these fair plains, it was the great object of all the Mahratta powers to regain their lost ground, and establish their power in Hindostan on a more permanent footing than before.

That portion of the Indian peninsula to which

the natives, and especially those of the south, have applied the name of Hindostan, and to which the business of this memoir especially refers, may be described as including all the country to the north of the Nerbudda river, and to the south of the Sutlege. The Sewalic mountains confine it on the north-east and east, while on the west its only boundary is the great desert which stretches from Meywar to the Indus. It thus embraces Rajahstan or Rajepootanah on the west, the provinces of Seharunpore, Dehlee, Agra, and Allahabad on the right side or western bank of the Jumna; the Doab, Rohilcund, and Oude on the east, with Bundelcund and Malwah on its southern line, though these are not generally regarded as included in Hindostan Proper.

Of these vast countries, Malwah was already the undisputed territory of the Mahrattas. It was here that Sindea had fixed his southern capital of Oojein; and Holcar, that of Indore. A portion of Bundelcund was held by Sindea, but the tenure was a loose one; for the numerous petty and warlike chiefs of that difficult country were ever rebelling against his authority, and it required the constant presence of an armed force to collect the tribute nominally assessed upon it.

Even Gwalior, and the neighbouring territory in the province of Agra, though afterwards the seat of Dowlut Rao Sindea's residence and camp, was, in 1778, in the possession of the Rana of Gohud. In process of time, as the power of Madhajee augmented from the services of his regular brigades, the Doab fell principally into his hands. But, though his light troops and Pindarrees might make an occasional dash across the Ganges, they could make no serious impression in that quarter; and a remnant of habitual respect for the fallen and blind Shah Allum, rescued by his own efforts from his savage enemies, withheld his nominal prime minister* from seizing the few districts which now represented the once vast empire of the Moghuls.

But to appropriate the immense and tempting region of Rajepootanah—once the seat of power and riches, and comparative civilization — the country of the most ancient and noblest races of India—the land of Hindoo chivalry and romance —this was the great object of the Mahrattas. This vast tract—a wide and varied scene of rich well-watered plains and sharp romantic ridges— of wide and howling wildernesses, and, once, of

* Madhajee Sindea, see page 45.

fertile and well-cultivated districts, — thickly sprinkled over with great and populous cities; ornamented with magnificent palaces, the dwellings of its princes and their lords; with venerable temples and splendid mausoleums; with strong fortresses and romantic castles perched on the pinnacles of fortified mountains; irrigated not only by copious streams, but vast and noble water-tanks—perfect lakes, constructed by beneficent sovereigns of the olden time, and formerly dotted all over with thriving villages. This was a region well fitted to attract the spoiler's eye, and as soon as the roving Mahrattas felt their power sufficient for the enterprise, they spread their plundering parties over it.

Unhappily, though the Rajepoot princes and their chieftains retained their ancient bravery, they appear to have lost much of that habit of active vigilance, which is as necessary as courage to the protection of a country. The annals of every Rajepoot state teem with accounts of its heroes and its valorous actions, and well and bravely did they defend their country against the invasions of the Moghul emperors; and bloody was the strife, and noble the self-devotion, recorded of many a Rajepoot feud. But the day of

constant and active military activity had so far gone by, that, though always to be found when roused, it was not always at hand for use; and, though able to meet and drive back a far more formidable enemy in the field, their modes of fighting were ill-calculated to withstand the attacks of a light-armed foe, who seemed to be everywhere at once, striking a blow here or there suddenly without the smallest warning, and then as suddenly vanishing. Thus the Mahrattas often overran the country, destroying much of it gradually, till in time finding their people ruined, and their resources fast diminishing, these haughty chiefs became constrained to assent to the payment of a tribute, or "black mail," to purchase security from such incursions.

The Rajepoots, as is sufficiently well known, are all of the second of the four great divisions of the Hindoos, called the Khettree, or military caste, which, though spread over all India, have their stronghold, as it were, in the region of Rajahstan, and form the military aristocracy of the country. They are subdivided into various tribes, each laying claim to very ancient and noble descent, of which the four principal are the Seesodias, the Rhattores, the Cuchwahas, and the Chohâns; the

Bhattees and Powârs, or Puârs, are also regarded highly. And Rajepootanah is divided into several extensive principalities, of which the chiefs of these tribes are the rulers. These have, in the course of time, suffered a further subdivision, by providing for members of the reigning families by grants of certain districts of land.

Of these principalities, the central one, Meywar, is regarded as the first in rank, if not extent; for its ruler has the title of Rana, is the chief of the Seesodia tribe, and has at all times been regarded by the Rajepoots themselves as the head of them all,—the prince round whom the whole military array of the country gathers, in case of a national emergency. It is an interesting country, being a plateau said to be 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, varied with hill and mountain, plain and valley, and full of beautiful and romantic scenery. Though even at this period greatly reduced in every way, it could once number 10,000 villages, and was rich in all the products of Central India. The dwelling of the former Ranas was at Chitore, a hill fortress of great strength, and celebrated in Indian story. Another mountain stronghold, Combhere, is not less so. But in later times a sovereigns have made their abode in the city

of Oodipore, where the Rana has a magnificent palace, situated on the brink of a large and beautiful lake.

The military force of Meywar, in former days, is said to have been great, but depending, as in all feudal governments, upon the goodwill of the powerful lords—here called Thakoors—who were more or less ready as their prince was powerful and the cause popular; it is not easy to estimate it. We hear of great musters, of hundreds of thousands of warriors, under some of the Ranas; but how worthy of credit the reports may be, or how many of the troops may have belonged to Meywar itself, it is impossible to judge. George Thomas, who was well informed on these points, stated it during the latter years of the eighteenth century to amount to 12,000 cavalry and 6,000 infantry. The Seesodias, like all Rajepoots, are brave and trustworthy, but in neither of these respects are they to be compared to the Rhattores, of whom we next have to speak.

Marwâr, the next state in rank, and exceeding Meywar in power and extent, lies to the west of this latter, and stretches far to the north of it. It extends in length, or from north-east to south-west, about 230 miles; and in breadth, from east

to west, about 270. Its soil and surface is more varied than that of Meywar, as its eastern districts are well watered by the streams that rise in the Mhairwarree mountains, which bound it on the east, and which form the Sookree and Loonee rivers; but toward the west consists of arid and barren plains, with rocky islands, which merge in the great desert that divides it from Sinde. Thus, though some portions are fertile, the greater part is a dreary waste of sterile and forbidding aspect, and subject to frequent famines from drought,—a fact which may be thought to bear some reference to its name, which, according to Colonel Tod, is in the native language Maroowâr, or Maroostân —the land of death.

Marwâr possesses several strongholds, of which the city of Joudpore, the residence of the Rajah, and from whence he is called the Rajah of Joudpore, reminded the writer of this strongly of the town and castle of Edinburgh, with its high and battlemented keep rising proudly over the city at its feet. Nagore, Mairtha, and Palee are also cities of note. The first is a more ancient place than Joudpore, though now much neglected, and on the very verge of the desert; and Mairtha has been rendered famous, being the site of many

desperate engagements, and in later years by a most bloody battle with De Boigne's brigades, which will be noticed hereafter.

The Rajah is chief of the Rhattores, who are the bravest and best troops of all the Rajepoot tribes. The Rhattore horse are celebrated over all Hindostan for their indomitable courage, and not without reason, as the reader will have opportunities of discovering in the sequel. Nor has the power of this state decayed to the same extent as that of Meywar; as being further removed from the Dekhan, and affording less temptation in the shape of plunder. Besides which, the habits of the Marwârees have been more formed for resisting predatory attacks, such being very much in their own way.

The military power of Marwâr is uncertain, from the same cause as that of Meywar, being dependent on the contingents of feudal chiefs—we hear of vast armies,—of Beejah Sing being at the head of 100,000 men, which must have included the general muster, or *khêre*, of the state, and the contingents of his tributaries, —and of troops of 10,000 and 15,000 horse being sent to aid an ally, as we shall have occasion to see. But Thomas sets down the mili-

tary force of Marwâr at 27,000 cavalry, and 3,000 infantry.

Jessulmere, which lies north-west of Marwâr, is a much smaller and less important state, which encroaches still farther on the western desert—in which, in fact, it forms an oasis of rocky ridges and sandy wastes, scarcely more fertile than the desert itself. It scarcely possesses a stream of running water, and its poverty and insignificance may be inferred from the number of its inhabitants, which do not, it is said, exceed 75,000 souls. The ruling tribe is the Bhattee Rajepoots, and they can turn out some excellent soldiers.

Bikanere, originally an offset from Marwâr, wrested from the Bhattees by the Rhattores, is a barren sandy tract in the great western desert, to the north-east of Jessulmere, and north of Marwâr, but of greater importance than the former, for its inhabitants are estimated, by Colonel Tod, at upwards of 500,000, of whom three-fourths are Jits (Jhâts?), the aboriginal race of the country; and the princes of Bikanere are said to have taken the field with 10,000 excellent soldiers, who fight well, though they are rather impatient of control and discipline. Thomas sets its force down at only 2,000 cavalry and 3,000

infantry. The country is very barren, water being exceedingly scarce, and chiefly to be found in wells from 100 to 300 feet deep.

Jeypore, or more properly Dhoondar, is the richest, if not the first or the largest of the Rajepoot states. Colonel Tod estimates its superficial contents, including Shekawuttee, at nearly 15,000 square miles, and that its population amounts to near two million of souls, of which Rajepoots and Meenas form the greater share. The ruling tribe is that of the Cuchwaha Rajepoots, of whom the reigning Rajah, Pertaub Sing, a weak and somewhat pusillanimous personage, was then chief. Its military force consisted at this time of a foreign army of 13,000 regular infantry, with guns; 4,000 *Nagas*, or Ghosseins, and some cavalry. In addition to these, the feudal levies of horse amounted to 4,000; and when the *khêre*, or levé-en-masse, was called out, it numbered 20,000 men of horse and foot. Thomas sets down the Jeypore cavalry at 30,000, and the infantry at 10,000 men.

Dhoondar is the most eastern of the Rajepoot states, bounding on that side with the provinces of Dehlee and Agra, and having, on the west, portions of Meywar, Marwâr, and Bikanere. The

soil is various and productive, and its revenues in prosperous times amounted to a crore of rupees. Besides the famous city of Jeypore, built by the still more celebrated Rajah Jeysing Sewaee, about the beginning of the 18th century, and which is one of the finest and most regularly constructed cities in India, there are several others well deserving notice,—and among them, the ancient fortified stronghold of Ambere, with the palace of the famous Rajah Maun Sing and its romantic fortress. India cannot produce a more splendid view than that of the wide plain of Jeypore, as seen upon the road from Ambere, with its noble city in the distance, and the foreground thickly studded with palaces, shrines, temples, and tanks, and multitudes of villages thick with groves and gardens. There are few places in Upper India better worth seeing than these two cities and their environs.

Harawtee, or, according to common parlance, Boondee Kotah, which lies to the south of Dhoondar, is but a small state in point of superficial extent, the Rajah of which is chief of the Hâra Rajepoots, but its soil is so rich, and its position on the river Chumbul so important, and its chief or regent at this time, Zalim Sing, so sagacious

and enterprising, and its soldiers so good and so brave, that we cannot pass it without some notice. Zalim Sing was remarkable as an agriculturist, even more than as a farmer. He farmed, indeed, the greater part of the country; and it is recorded by Colonel Tod, that, at one time, he had 5,000 ploughs drawn by 20,000 oxen, and he has sold grain in one year to the value of a million pounds sterling. He is remarkable also for having been among the first of the native powers in this quarter who appreciated the value of regular infantry, trained and commanded by Europeans. Kotah and Boondee possess another, though a melancholy claim, on the attention of the British reader, as it was the country through which the disastrous retreat of Monson was conducted when he fled from Holcar in 1803-4, and where, little as it seems to be known, the Hara chief of Coela sacrificed himself and his men in protecting, along with the gallant and devoted Luccan,* the rear of the retreating detachment.

Of the remaining smaller states,—as Kishenghur, Machery, Ooneara, Karowlee, and many more petty lordships, offsets from the greater states, it is unnecessary to say more than that

* Tod, vol. ii. p. 548.

they of necessity followed the fortunes of the strongest, and at the time in question paid tribute to Sindea or to Holcar, the habitual depredators of Rajepootanah, as the fortunes of either predominated in the quarters where they were situated.

Such was the country, and such the people, which it was the object of Mahratta ambition—perhaps it might rather be said cupidity—to appropriate and subdue; and of the four chieftains whom we have named above as the champions of the Mahratta confederation, Madhajee Sindea was at once the ablest and the boldest, as well as nearest to the scene of action at the proper juncture. Madhajee was the illegitimate son of Ranojee Sindea, who was a distinguished commander under the great Bajee Rao Peishwah. After the death, or rather murder, of his legitimate brother, Junkojee, at Paneeput, he succeeded to the family jaghire, in Malwah, and, for many years after, his life continued to be one course of active military enterprise and shrewd political intrigue, by which he contrived gradually to increase his power, and substantially to effect his complete independence, although in name he professed himself still the devoted feudatory of the Peishwah.

This affected humility was in fact one great mean of effecting his elevation. When at Poonah he assumed an air of the greatest respect for the Peishwah, and insisted on his right to carry that prince's slippers, as he said his father had done; and, instead of arrogating any exalted title, would only suffer himself to be called Pateil —that is, head man of a village or district; and evinced the greatest reluctance to sitting in the Peishwah's presence. The truth was, that he did everything in his power to efface from people's remembrance the stain of his illegitimate birth, for this was not forgotten; and the jealousy of the old Mahratta chiefs was unwilling to acknowledge him as *Pateil*, and thus legitimate successor of his father's rights. To this, however, he adhered, and by this appellation he continued to be known; and the natives afterwards used to say that Madhajee Sindea, by calling himself Pateil, had made himself sovereign of an empire.

But there was another measure to which he was far more indebted for his military success and subsequent greatness, than even to his consummate political address. This was the adoption into his service of a body of regular infantry, disciplined and commanded by European officers;

and this leads us to the notice of another class of adventurers, which the stirring and unsettled spirit of the times had called into being.

Every one knows that the English first made their appearance in India as merchants, and this character they maintained for a century and a half; and though they had built a fort at Madras, and another called Fort St. David on the same coast, and though during that time they had been frequently forced to defend themselves by sea against their European rivals, they never were at variance with the natives until the war which broke out with France in 1744. This war soon extended to India, and the native powers were not long of becoming parties to the struggle between the rival European nations in the south. The insane tyranny of Suraje-u-dowlut, at Calcutta, led also to hostilities in that quarter. Soldiers and warlike talents rose into demand, and the men who had left their homes to follow the peaceful and philanthropic occupation of the merchant, were forced to seize the musket, and gird on the sword, in defence of their lives and their liberties.

In doing this, many discovered their true bent, and became first-rate officers and leaders—the

men to whom Britain owes the foundation of that vast empire which she now enjoys in the East—whose names are engraven in the hearts of their countrymen, as they are written on the page of history—men whom we talk of as we do of Wolf, or of Abercromby, or of Nelson, among the heroes of the Western Hemisphere.

But the exigencies of the time, and more especially the desperate struggle between the French and English troops in the Carnatic, gave birth to a class of adventurers less fortunate than those just mentioned, in the numerous aspirants for employment of European birth, who flocked to either army, hoping to carve out their way to fame or fortune by the sword. Of these many fell; and others, failing, and disgusted with the ill success of their countrymen, left them to try their luck in the service of native princes. These chiefs, convinced by painful experience of the great value of military organization and discipline, and believing that if they could but introduce such discipline amongst their own troops, they should secure the advantages which had given success to the Europeans, willingly entertained such adventurers, or even deserters, from the French or English troops; and placing under them bodies of

native soldiers, expected them to be disciplined, and rendered equal, at all events, to the Sepoys of these powers.

In this way, it is found that, even from an early period of the eighteenth century, many native princes—as the Nizam, the Nawabs of Bengal and Oude, and several of the Rajepoot Rajahs, as well as the more newly-risen Mahratta powers —employed European officers in their service. Of these, many were highly respectable by birth, as well as education and character, and well deserved the rank and fortune to which several of them attained; while others, of originally low origin, and deficient in those qualities which are requisite for success, sank unheard of, or became degraded and despised for their vices.

In the first class of these soldiers of fortune we may mention, amongst others, the names of De Boigne, Raymond, Martine, Perron, Dudernaig, Hessing, Thomas, and, though last, certainly not the least worthy, the subject of these memoirs— James Skinner. But as the first of these gentlemen played a part which materially influenced the fortunes of the chief who became our hero's master, and was himself a very remarkable personage, it is he who must first claim our notice.

CHAPTER II.

General De Boigne, his origin and rise— Employed by Sindea—His success—War with Ismael Beg Moghul—Cruelties committed by Gholaum Kauder on Shah Allum — Fate of Gholaum Kauder — General Martine — De Boigne's return to Sindea's service—Increase of Sindea's regular army — Battles of Patun and Mairtha—De Boigne becomes Commander-in-Chief of Hindostan — Taking of Kanounde—Holcar—Battle of Luckhairee—De Boigne's influence with Sindea—Quits his service—Character—Perron succeeds him.

Benoit de Boigne was a native of Chamberri, in Savoy, who, having made choice of the military profession, commenced his career as ensign in the regiment of Lord Clare, one of those which formed the Irish brigade in the service of France, and was a corps famous for its discipline. In this regiment, during a period of five years' service in various countries, he acquired that knowledge of military affairs which was afterwards so conducive to his advancement. Promotion, however, com-

ing too slow for his ambition, he quitted the service of France, and, having secured good introductions, entered that of Russia, under Admiral Orloff, then at war with the Turks.

In the Archipelago he saw some service, but was taken prisoner at the siege of Tenedos, and remained so until the end of the war. Being at Smyrna, he heard from some Englishmen, whom he met with there, so dazzling a description of India, that he resolved to visit that country, and try his fortune there.

After some disappointments and difficulties, he made his way to Grand Cairo, from whence, by the influence of Mr. Baldwin, the British Consul-general, he obtained a passage from Suez to Madras, where he arrived in the beginning of 1778. There, also, by the kindness of Mr. Baldwin, who gave him an introduction to Major Sydenham, town-major of Fort George, he was recommended to Mr. Rumbold, the governor, and by him was appointed to the 6th Native Battalion of that presidency. While serving with that, he narrowly escaped sharing the fate of Colonel Baillie's detachment, having been sent with two companies to escort a convoy of grain from Madras.

Soon afterwards, conceiving himself unjustly treated by Lord Macartney, then the governor, in some affair of military promotion, he threw up his commission, and resolved to proceed to Calcutta, and thence overland to Russia; a design which Lord Macartney, sensible as it would seem of his error, aided, by giving him letters of introduction to Warren Hastings, then Governor-General of India.

That gentleman received De Boigne with kindness, and furnished him with letters, not only to the British authorities in the upper provinces, but to the native princes in alliance with the British Government; thus insuring him not only civility and protection, but considerable pecuniary advantage in the presents which an individual so recommended was sure to receive. This he particularly experienced at Lucknow, where the Nawab made him valuable presents, and gave him letters of credit on Cabool and Candahar for 12,000 rupees.

From Lucknow, Mr. De Boigne proceeded towards Dehlee, in company with Major Browne, an English officer, at that time deputed on a mission to the emperor. But that gentleman's progress being impeded by the jealousy of the

emperor's minister, Mr. De Boigne, being taken for one of his suite, was also detained; so he embraced that opportunity of visiting the camp of Madhajee Sindea, at the invitation of the British Resident, Mr. Anderson. On his way thither, being still an object of suspicion, and equally so to Sindea as to the Moghuls, he suffered under one of these tricks of political legerdemain which are not always confined to Asiatic courts. Sindea, desirous of ascertaining his true character, and the motives of his journey, employed certain of the dexterous thieves of the country to steal his baggage, that he might learn the truth from his papers. These, including his letters of credit, he never recovered, though, by the interference of Mr. Anderson, the Resident, the greater part of his baggage was afterwards restored to him. But this loss Mr. De Boigne regarded as fatal both to his purposed journey and to his fortune.

It was at this time, and under these circumstances, that De Boigne appears first to have entertained the idea of seeking employment in the service of some native prince; and Gwalior, then in possession of the Rana of Gohud, being besieged by Sindea, he conceived a plan for its relief, which he communicated to the Rana,

through a Scottish officer in his service, named Sangster, who was in command of 1,000 well-disciplined Sepoys, with a very respectable train of artillery. His proposition was, that, on receiving an advance of 100,000 rupees, he would raise two battalions of Sepoys within the emperor's territories east of the Jumna, in such a manner as to awaken no suspicion, and, in conjunction with Sangster and his corps from Gohud, would fall on Sindea's camp by surprise. This scheme was frustrated by the suspicion of the Rana, who was afraid to trust De Boigne with the money, and who had hopes of interesting the English in his favour; but he turned it to some advantage, by letting the plan be known as if really contemplated, in order to intimidate Sindea. And Sindea, though it increased the ill-will he had conceived against De Boigne, gave that officer full credit for the merit of the suggestion.

De Boigne, thus disappointed, tendered his services next to Pertaub Sing, the Rajah of Jeypore, who, with the other Rajepoot states, was jealously watching Sindea's movements, and ready to oppose him. It is singular enough that he should thus have continued to irritate that prince, whose service he was ultimately destined to enter, and

whose power he was to be the instrument of extending so greatly; and twice to have offered his aid to the very powers whom he was so soon to vanquish and humiliate. His offer was entertained by Pertaub Sing, and negotiations were entered into for the raising of two battalions; but having considered it proper to acquaint Mr. Hastings with the step he was going to take, and having addressed him in too official a form, as "Governor-General," that gentleman felt it his duty to order him back to Calcutta, a summons with which, however inconvenient, Mr. De Boigne thought proper immediately to comply. Mr. Hastings, pleased with this prompt obedience, permitted him to return; but before he could reach Jeypore, events had occurred which induced the Rajah to alter his mind, and he dismissed Mr. De Boigne with a present of 10,000 rupees.

Thus again and more seriously disappointed, Mr. De Boigne was at a loss how to proceed; but just at this time he heard that Sindea was meditating an expedition into Bundelcund; and he sent to that chief proposals to raise, for this service, two battalions of 850 men each. To this, after some negotiation, Sindea agreed, making no

present advance, but settling on De Boigne himself a monthly pay of a thousand rupees, and for each man, including officers, a wage of eight rupees per month. These battalions were to be formed, as nearly as possible, on the model of those in the English service, in respect to arms, clothes, and discipline,—a labour, the extent of which, thus imposed on one individual, especially with De Boigne's straitened resources, all military men will know how to appreciate. He allowed the men five rupees per month, and out of the overplus of the eight rupees paid his officers, whom he gradually collected, Europeans of all different nations; and Sangster, having joined him, became superintendent of his cannon-foundry. In spite of every obstacle, he succeeded in completing his two battalions, and reporting them as ready to march, within five months; when he was ordered to join the army in Bundelcund, under Appa Khunde Rao.

This chieftain, one of Sindea's principal officers, had under his command a large force of cavalry, but scarcely any infantry; so that De Boigne's two battalions, with their artillery, were found of incalculable service, insomuch that they were never off duty; and they greatly distinguished

themselves on all occasions, especially at the siege of the strong hill-fortress of Kalinjer. But the state of affairs in the north did not permit Sindea to leave so efficient a part of his force long at such a distance; and Appa Khunde Rao received orders to march, with all expedition, to assist his master in his operations in Hindostan.

For some time previous to these events, the intrigues and crimes of the nobles of the court of Dehlee had occasioned so much confusion in the Moghul empire, that Madhajee, ever ready to avail himself of an opportunity, thought the time had come for him to advance to the northward. The well known Nujuff Khan, Ameer-ool-omrah, and prime minister to the Emperor Shah Allum, having died in April 1782, was succeeded in office by Meerza Sheffee, to the prejudice of his adopted son, Afrasiab Khan, who had, at first, been acknowledged his successor. But Meerza Sheffee was strongly opposed by a party headed by Mahomed Beg Hamadanee, governor of Agra, and Ismael Beg, his nephew; by which latter person he was soon treacherously assassinated. He was succeeded in office by Afrasiab Khan, who was in his turn murdered by the brother of the slain; so that Mahomed Beg and his nephew remained

unopposed, but were unable, from the increasing anarchy, to take any vigorous steps towards maintaining their authority, or opposing the powerful army with which Sindea now crossed the Chumbul. Indeed, so well pleased was the unfortunate emperor to see the prospect of an end to these outrages, that he welcomed the Mahratta prince's arrival at Dehlee (January 1785), and bestowed upon him the dignity of prime minister of the empire,—a measure which even Hamadanee Beg acquiesced in; and marched, at his orders, to reduce the fortress of Rajoghur.

This success was, however, too rapid, and owed its attainment to circumstances too fortuitous to be permanent. The Moghul nobles, by degrees, recovered their energies; and, indignant at the obtrusion of a Mahratta chief into the highest dignity of the empire, not only ceased for the time from their own intrigues, but negociated with the Rajepoot princes of Jeypore and Marwâr for their aid in humbling the hated upstart. Sindea was by no means unaware of this conspiracy, nor slow to prepare for meeting the danger. The imperial army was now under his command; and as the rebellion had not as yet broken out, nor had the disaffected declared

themselves, it consisted of both Mahrattas and Moghuls; and its first movements were directed against the refractory Rajepoots.

Scarcely had they reached the vicinity of Jeypore, towards which place they first marched, than Mahomed Beg Hamadanee and Ismael Beg went over, with their followers, to the enemy. In order to arrest this spirit of disaffection, which, not unknown to Sindea, was spreading among the troops, but which he trusted to extinguish by a decisive success, he resolved on giving battle immediately. Accordingly, he placed his right under the command of a French officer, M. Lestineau, and his left under Mr. De Boigne; and posting twenty-five battalions of the imperial troops in the centre, he took charge of the cavalry himself, as a reserve, and began the battle by a heavy cannonade. Mahomed Beg himself was killed by a cannon shot, early in the day, while attacking the Mahratta right. But Ismael Beg rallied his wavering troops, and drove the right back upon the baggage until they were supported by the reserve. On the other side, 10,000 Rhattore cavalry * came thundering furiously upon De Boigne, charging up to the very

* This cavalry have already been alluded to, p. 27.

guns, and cutting down the artillerists, in spite of immense carnage made in their own ranks. But the steadiness of the regular troops prevailed; the Rhattores, broken and greatly thinned, gave way, and the battalions advanced in their turn; but when they called on the Moghul centre to aid them, the traitors refused to stir a foot: thus was victory snatched from the Mahratta prince, and a bloody day ended without result.

Sindea, nothing disheartened, resolved to try a second battle. But, next morning, the whole Moghul infantry, with colours flying and drums beating, went bodily over to join Ismael Beg, taking with them eighty pieces of cannon. De Boigne proposed to charge them, but Sindea thought it more prudent to let them alone.

This sweeping desertion, which so powerfully swelled the enemy's ranks, rendered it impossible to show face to them for the time, so the army retired upon Alwar,* followed closely by Ismael Beg; and De Boigne, who had charge of the rear-guard, had for eight days to sustain his repeated attacks; but at length, by great exertions, they gained the banks of the Chumbul, and Sindea saw

* The very romantic capital of the Machery Rajah.

its waters roll once more between him and his enemies.

Agra alone, of all his conquests in Hindostan, held out; defended valiantly by Lukwa-Dada, a Mahratta Brahmin of the Shenwee caste,* and a favourite officer of Sundea's, against Ismael Beg, and the infamous Gholaumkawdir, chief of Seharunpore; and so well and so long did that brave soldier hold out, that Sindea, assisted by the Jhats (a Hindoo tribe of low caste, originally from the banks of the Indus), who hated the Moghuls, was enabled to muster his forces once more, in order to attempt its relief. He brought up all the troops within reach, recalled all detachments, and sent a large force forward under the command of Rannee Khan,† the Bhaee, and Appa Khundoorao, to which were added the regular battalions of De Boigne. Joined by the Jhats, under Sew Sing Foujedar, and M. Lestineau, together with two Mahomedan officers, they marched straight to Agra, but were met on the

* The Shenwee Brahmins were a very influential tribe, or sect, of the Mahratta Brahmins.

† Rannee, or Rana Khan, was the man who, as has been said above, saved the life of Madhajee Sindea, after the e of Paneeput.

way, sixteen miles from Bhurtpore, by Ismael Beg and Gholaum Kawdir, who had raised the siege to give them battle. The action took place on the 24th of April 1788, commencing by a cannonade from the guns of Ismael Beg. The Jhats took the right, the Mahrattas the left, of Sindea's line. The former were all put to flight by a fierce attack by Gholaum Kawdir, except the corps under Mr. Lestineau, which for some time maintained their ground. Jehangeer Khan, one of the Mahomedan officers of the Jhats, deserted to Ismael Beg without firing a shot. This latter chief charged furiously the infantry of De Boigne, who received him with the most perfect firmness and intrepidity; and had he been suitably supported by the cavalry, the issue of the day would have been different from what it proved; but after sustaining heavy loss, the regular troops were forced to give way and retire upon Bhurtpore.

The triumph of the Moghul chiefs was, however, of short duration. Sindea, reinforced and nowise discouraged, returned to the charge. Luckwa Dada gallantly held out in Agra. Jealousies took place among the Moghul chiefs; and Ranny Khan, hearing of an incursion of the Sikhs, sent a body of

Mahrattas and Jhats to join and encourage them to fall upon the Jagheer of Gholaum Kawdir. That chief was forced by this diversion to leave Ismael Beg's army in order to repel this invasion; while the Mahratta army, joined by the Jhats, once more gave battle to Ismael Beg near Agra. The Moghuls were utterly routed and dispersed. Ismael Beg himself, severely wounded, escaped by the swiftness of his horse, and swam the Jumna; after which, making for the camp of Gholaum Kawdir, both took refuge in Dehlee. Then getting access by treachery to the palace, he committed these atrocities* which have rendered his name a curse, and which he completed by himself, digging out the eyes of the unfortunate Shah Allum.

To describe the bloody scenes of the next two months during which the capital remained in possession of this monster, for whose insane conduct nothing but madness can account, is as foreign to the present purpose as it would be revolting to the reader. Those who are anxious to become acquainted with its details may consult the authorities mentioned in the note at foot. It is not

* See Franklin's History of Shah Allum, the Seir Mootakhereen, and other histories of India.

easy to account for the apparent remissness of Sindea, or his general, in not following up their victory and relieving the capital. If it was occasioned by his policy in giving the robbers time to quarrel over their prey, it was at least a fatal proceeding for the wretched emperor and his family. When Sindea did come in person, he did all he could to alleviate their melancholy condition, and himself replaced the unfortunate emperor upon the throne. That these services should be rewarded by a confirmation of the former grant of the prime ministership to the chief who performed them, was a natural consequence; and to this title was added that of commander-in-chief of the imperial forces.

It is satisfactory to learn that punishment, even in this world, awaited the principal actors in this series of crimes. At the approach of the Mahratta army, Gholaum Kawdir fled, carrying with him the nazir of the Shah's household, who had been his treacherous coadjutor in his crimes, and pursued by a large body to Meerut, about six miles from Dehlee, where for a considerable time he defended himself against them. But supplies running short, and the garrison becoming mutinous, he made a rush from the fort with 500 horsemen,

and gallantly cut his way through the enemy. But his troops, disheartened, began to drop away, until he found himself alone, when his horse, exhausted, fell, and he was unable to proceed. The zemindar of a neighbouring village took him prisoner, and carried him to the Mahratta camp, where, first, he was suspended in a cage made for the occasion, like a wild beast, in front of the army; then, after every possible indignity, his nose, ears, hands, and feet being cut off, he was, thus mutilated, sent off to Dehlee, but he died miserably on the way. The nazir, his treacherous associate, after being stripped and imprisoned by himself, and carried off with him to Meerut, was taken there, and being sent back to Dehlee, was trampled to death by an elephant, by Sindea's command.

For three years did Mr. De Boigne continue in the service of the Mahratta chief, who fully appreciated his talents and his zeal. But he was sensible that he was still in a false position—that with the command of so limited a force he could effect nothing of importance; and animated with a sincere desire to increase his master's power, he made proposals to Sindea to augment his regular force to a brigade of 10,000 men, formed upon the same

model as the two original battalions. But though that prince was fully convinced of the value of his regular troops, and quite alive to the merits of their commander, his Mahratta prejudices were too strong in favour of cavalry, and the jealousies of his own chiefs and officers too firmly rooted against the employment of Europeans, to render it politic in him to assent to a proposal which would give to them so much encouragement. The time, in fact, was not ripe for adopting so bold a measure, added to which the expense of forming such a corps presented in itself a serious difficulty. All these considerations weighed with Sindea, who replied to the proposal in terms which Mr. De Boigne could construe into nothing less than a courteous refusal, and on this he tendered his resignation. It was accepted by the Mahratta prince; but they parted with such expressions of consideration and esteem, as portended that their separation would not be permanent.

For the present, Mr. De Boigne, free to go where he pleased, retired to Lucknow, where, by the advice of his friend, the well-known General Martine,* who had made his abode there, he

* General Claude Martine, born 1732, was the son of a silk manufacturer at Lyons, who, not relishing the inactive

entered into commercial speculations, which promised a return more lucrative at least than

profession of his father, enlisted as a trooper in Count Lally's body-guard, and went out with him to Pondicherry, where the Count was appointed Governor. But that nobleman's severity of discipline, and unconciliatory manners, so disgusted his men that numbers deserted to the English, and among them the whole of his body-guard, who were very well received; and so conspicuous did young Martine render himself for spirit and activity, that he soon after received permission from the Madras government to raise a company of Chasseurs from among the French prisoners, with the rank of ensign in the British service. This corps was soon ordered to Bengal, on the way to which Martine and his men were nearly lost, the vessel foundering off the point of Gaudover.

In the Bengal military service Martine received great encouragement, being duly promoted to the rank of captain in the line; and being a clever engineer, he was sent to Oude, in order to survey the north-eastern provinces. During this time, as he resided in Lucknow, he became known to the Nawâb Vizier Sujah-u-dowlut, who conceiving a high idea of his talents, solicited and obtained permission from the Governor and Council of Calcutta to appoint him superintendent of his military park and arsenal; and Martine was so well satisfied with this appointment and his prospects at Lucknow, that he relinquished his pay and allowance from the Company, retaining his rank.

His fortune was now secured; he became the confidential adviser of his Highness the Vizier, and without any ostensible situation in the government, and seldom even appearing at the Durbar, had more positive influence than the

the profession of arms, which he had so long been engaged in.*

ministers themselves. This was the source of a vast fortune, for, independently of his large salary and emoluments, presents from all quarters, as well as from his master, poured in upon him. He became the agent for procuring all the numerous European articles which were then the taste at Lucknow,—had the greatest share in negociating all loans for the state,—and became the depository of vast sums belonging to private individuals, on which, being placed with him for security, he realized a large profit. During all this time his rank in the British army went on, and in 1796 he received the Brevet-rank of Major-General. In Lucknow he lived without much show, and though hospitable to his English friends, was neither remarkable for the excellence of his table or equipage. But he erected, on the banks of the Ghoomtee river, a curious and remarkable house, constructed entirely of stone, and suitable for defence, having suites of rooms suited to all seasons of the year, and filled with curious contrivances for comfort. Its exterior decorations were equally singular and fanciful, and it had a well-stored, if not elegant, garden attached. In the centre of this edifice there is a vault, deep underground, which he formed for a mausoleum, and in which he lies interred, with this inscription over the tomb, written by himself:—

Here lies CLAUDE MARTINE.
He was born at Lyons, A.D. 1732.
He came to India a private soldier,
And died a Major-General.

* These were continued by him to the last, even after he resumed his military occupations; and most of his fortune was remitted home, in goods, through Lisbon.

But he was not permitted long to pursue these peaceful avocations. Sindea, though generally successful, and conqueror of the provinces of Agra, Dehlee, and Seharunpore, must have long felt that his power wanted stability. His shrewd intellect no doubt led him to perceive that cavalry

The name of this singular house, or castle, is Constantia; but he had another fine residence on the banks of the Ganges, with a large park attached, to which he sometimes used to retire in the hot season.

For fifteen years before his death, he was greatly afflicted with the stone, and the remarkable means by which, with the exertion of indomitable perseverance and the firm endurance of much pain for more than twelve months, he relieved himself, are facts well known to medical men. But the experiment was not calculated to succeed a second time, and the complaint gradually returning, terminated his life in the year 1800, at the age of sixty-eight.

Of this singular man there are many and curious anecdotes told by those who knew him; and a detailed account of his life and fortunes would be both an amusing and instructive work. His fortune at his death was said to be about 330,000*l.*, but there is reason to believe it exceeded that sum. He bequeathed 25,000*l.* to his relatives at Lyons, and the same sum for the use of the poor in that city's jurisdiction; a like sum, for the same purpose, to Calcutta, and the same to Lucknow. The rest was disposed of in several legacies, too numerous for insertion here; and the will is said to contain some curious expositions of his guiding principles through life.

was a force more suited to predatory warfare than for the maintenance of a fixed and permanent empire. It is said, too, that his illegitimate birth had tended somewhat to diminish his influence amongst his countrymen, and he resolved to compensate for this disadvantage by creating a force which should be more under his own command, and more available for all services than his Mahratta troops. It was, no doubt. in pursuance of this system that he enlisted a large proportion of Rajepoots and Mahomedans, and entertained large bodies of Ghosseins,* who, until employed by Madhajee, had seldom appeared as soldiers in

* Ghosseins are one of the four principal classes of Hindoo devotees, and are understood to be followers of Mahadeo. Those who affect great sanctity often go naked, and subject themselves to most severe tortures and self-privations: others follow secular pursuits, becoming merchants, soldiers, &c. They often used to congregate in bands, and range the country, committing great excesses and outrages, on pretence of seeking for alms: sometimes they assemble in large bodies, under a leader, who is at once their ghostly instructor and captain, and hire themselves out as mercenaries; and Sindea entertained a body of these men, under a leader named Himmut Bahadru, who afterwards attained to considerable celebrity. These military Ghosseins were often called Nâgas, and generally fought with desperate resolution; they affected the colour of *orange* in their garments.

the Mahratta armies. It was this motive, also, which at last induced him to resolve on increasing his regular troops, and placing them under the command of European officers. He was aware, too, that the Moghul power, though scattered and dispersed, had not been so completely destroyed as to be harmless, and that the Rajepoot chiefs were hostile in their hearts, while the Affghans were even then threatening another descent from the north.

Impressed by these considerations, it is not surprising that Sindea remembered the propositions of De Boigne, and resolved to secure, if possible, the return of that gentleman to his service. His vakeel found Mr. De Boigne immersed in his new employment; but he could not resist an appeal which spoke equally to his inclinations, his pride, and his interest—for Sindea made liberal offers. After a few days spent in regulating his affairs, he repaired to Muttra, at that time the head-quarters of the Mahratta prince. A single audience, where both parties were willing, sufficed to bring them to an understanding, and an arrangement was concluded with every mark of confidence and esteem on both sides. De Boigne was empowered to raise immediately a brigade of

10,000 men, disciplined in the European style, and at a rate of pay higher than that of any other corps in the service, and the General's own appointments were fixed at 4,000 rupees per month. His two original battalions formed the nucleus of this force, and the battalion of Lestineau, which had been abandoned by their commander, and then mutinied for want of pay, after being broken up as a corps, were pardoned by Sindea, at De Boigne's request, and admitted individually into the new brigade. Thus, three of the thirteen battalions were already complete, and, by deputing steady officers into Rohilcund, the Doab, and Oude, the rest were soon raised, so potent was the name of Sindea, and the assurance of good and regular pay.

In a few months the corps was complete. Ten of the battalions were dressed like the Sepoys, and armed, as they were, with musket and bayonet. The other three, composed of Affghans, wore a Persian uniform, and were armed with matchlocks, to which the General added a bayonet. 500 Mewattees, irregular soldiers, intended for camp duty, and 500 cavalry, with sixty pieces of cannon, completed the brigade, which formed in itself a little army of 12,000 men, under the

colours of him who had created it—the White Cross of Savoy.

The officers of this body were principally Europeans, of all nations, many of them British, and men very respectable by birth, education, and character; and all lent their General their willing aid in his arduous duty of bringing under and preserving discipline amongst the new levies. The non-commissioned officers were selected from the *élite* of the old battalions. The object of all was to create and keep up a high *esprit du corps;* and in a short time the brigade was fit for duty.

Their services were soon required. Ismael Beg, with his Moghuls, supported by the Rajahs of Jeypore and Jhoudpore, appeared in arms at the town of Patun, in the province of Ajmeer; and Sindea, after some characteristic intriguing to corrupt the regular troops of Ismael, ordered Gopaul Rao Bhow, Luckwa Dada, and De Boigne, to attack his camp. The battle took place on the 20th June 1790, and was a very severe one; for Holcar, who had promised his assistance to Sindea, stood aloof during the engagement; and Ismael Beg fought with his usual courage and determination. The line had been

formed at nine in the morning, but the brunt of the battle was not until the afternoon, when Ismael Beg made a furious attack upon De Boigne's infantry, penetrating even to the guns, and cutting down the gunners at their pieces. But again the resolute energy of that officer saved the corps, and repelled the desperate charge. The brigade then advanced upon the enemy's batteries, which he carried one after another; and Ismael Beg, completely routed, fled to the gates of Jeypore, leaving behind him all his guns, one hundred in number, fifty elephants, two hundred standards, and all his baggage. Next day, too, seven of his battalions and 10,000 irregular troops came over and submitted to the conqueror. The day was a bloody one on both sides; some assert that 11,000 or 12,000 of the Mahrattas were killed, but Ismael Beg's army was completely destroyed: all this was entirely owing to De Boigne and his regular brigade, for the cavalry did very little. The town of Patun, and its strong citadel, surrendered to the conqueror in three days after; and its commander declared himself the vassal of the Mahratta prince.*

* The Rhattores impute the loss of this battle to the treachery of the Jeypooreans, who are said to have agreed

Sindea, who received accounts of the battle at Muttra, where his head-quarters still remained, now sent De Boigne to invade the territory of Jhoudpore, the Rajah of which state had so powerfully assisted his late enemy, Ismael Beg. On the route, that officer undertook the siege of the fort of Ajmeer, which had been taken by the Marwarees by a *coup de main;* but learning that Beeja Sing, the Rajah, had advanced to Mairtha, a town some twenty miles west of that city, he left a corps of 2,000 irregular cavalry to maintain the blockade, and advanced with the rest of his force to meet the enemy. At Mairtha, then the home of the bravest clans of Marwar,—on the plains of which the crown of that kingdom had been fought for in many a memorable battle,—whence, but a few years before, the bravest of

with the Mahrattas to hold aloof during the engagement. No doubt Sindea's intrigues may have effected something, but there had been for some time a jealousy between the Rhattores and Chuchwahas, on account of some contemptuous verses made on the latter by a band of Marwas: on this occasion they retaliated on the Rhattores in a doggrel verse, which charges them with the disgrace of having lost at Patun five essentials of men—horse, shoes, turban, moustachios, and "the sword of Marwar,"—in other words, had become women,—a sarcasm that has never been forgotten.—Tod's Rajahstan, vol. i. p. 761.

the Rhattores, with their Prince Beeja Sing and 200,000 men, had been driven from a murderous field, by these same Mahrattas,*—on this same ground, covered with the innumerable tombs of those who had fallen in former days, was the same prince, and 30,000 of his best Rhattores, with 20,000 foot to boot, destined to sustain a no less disastrous defeat. The Mahratta cavalry, nearly equal in numbers to that of the Rajepoots, preceded by one day De Boigne, whose infantry, with its eighty pieces of cannon, was embarrassed in the muddy bed of the Loonee river; and they encamped five miles distant from the Rhattore cavalry, who were drawn out upon the plain of Mairtha, with one flank resting on the village of Dangiwas. It is said, that had not some unhappy differences existed amongst the Rhattore chiefs, respecting the leadership of the army, they might have taken advantage of De Boigne's absence, and charged and scattered the Mahrattas before that officer and his regular troops could have come up. But, unfortunately, they neither did this, nor, as it appears, did they keep an ordinarily

* In 1753, when Ram Sing endeavoured to dispute the throne with Beeja Sing, and called in the Mahrattas and Jeypooreans to his assistance.

good look-out in their own lines; for De Boigne came up in the grey of the next morning, and completely surprised the unguarded Rajepoots while at their ablutions, or asleep, by sending among them showers of grape from his powerful guns. All became panic and confusion in a moment; the position was forced,—the guns and the irregular infantry put to flight.

An error on the part of De Boigne's commander * on the left seemed at this time to open a glimpse of hope to the Rajepoots, for, pressing on with three battalions, he was nearly cut off from the main body, by a party of Rhattore horse who had rallied and kept together. Some of their best chiefs, it appears, awaking from the deep sleep of opium,† found their camp deserted or in confusion, and calling around them their immediate followers, they collected about 4,000 of their best horsemen, with which they attacked the imprudent commander on the right. De Boigne saw the danger, and flew to the rescue, and forming part of his infantry into a hollow square, resisted the repeated and furious charges of the Rhattores, who, as usual, galloped up to the

* The name is believed to be *Rohan*.

† Tod's Rajahstan, vol. i.

muzzles of the guns, in spite of the murderous showers of grape, which told fearfully in their dense mass, and cut down the gunners, but could not penetrate the square; they broke the line, however, and passed on to engage the Mahratta horse, which scattered at their approach. But they had no support, and the guns, wheeled round, continued their murderous discharge; the troops re-formed to receive them as they came back; their ranks were thinned by grape and musketry; and though they continued to charge up to the very bayonet points, it was each time with weaker effect,—until, falling in detail before the immoveable square, scarce one of the 4,000 left the field. By nine of the morning the battle was over; by ten, the camp, cannon, and baggage were in possession of the Mahrattas; by three in the afternoon the city had been taken by assault, and had become the headquarters of the Mahratta commanders.

The consequence of this victory, which, beyond the smallest question, was won entirely by De Boigne and his regular brigade, was the submission to Sindea of the Rajahs of Joudpore and Oodeypore; and by this and other successes, un-

questionably owing to the same cause, the superiority of regular troops had become so firmly established, that Sindea now resolved to triple the number of those under De Boigne, and he accordingly directed that officer to raise two more brigades upon the same model as the first, assigning for their maintenance fifty-two purgunnahs eastward of the Jumna, and yielding twenty-two lakhs of rupees a year. The general had two per cent. upon this expenditure, besides his regular pay of 6,000 rupees per month—a sum which was doubled by other perquisites; and he fixed his headquarters at Coel, in the Doab, in the centre of the assigned districts, where he occupied himself in bringing to perfection the material and discipline of this force, which, by the sanction of the emperor, was to bear the title of the Imperial army. The administration of Hindostan was committed to Gopaul Rao Bhow, but its defence was intrusted to De Boigne.

It were foreign to the present purpose to follow minutely the proceedings of Sindea and his general, De Boigne, after their decisive check to the Rajepoot princes. The next important occasion for the employment of the regular brigades, was against a Mahratta enemy. Tookajee Hol-

car,* at all times a treacherous ally and jealous rival of Sindea, after betraying him at Patun, and on other occasions, took advantage of his absence in the Dekhan to cross the Chumbul into Rajepootanah. Sindea, though successful and victorious in the north, did not feel himself by any means so independent in the Dekhan as to neglect his interest there,—especially as the celebrated Nana Furnavese, the Peishwah's minister, was known to be his enemy at that prince's court. He therefore contrived a special mission to Poonah,—namely, that of conveying to the Peishwah the khilut of investiture of the office of Wukeel-e-Mootluq, or chief minister of the Moghul empire, from the Imperial court; and so well did he succeed in his object, that, in spite of Furnavese's enmity, he gained the friendship and confidence of the young Peishwah. It was while thus employed, that Holcar, trusting not only to the absence of his rival, but to the influence of Nana Furnavese, believed that he had a golden opportunity to deal Sindea a severe blow in the north; so picking a quarrel with Gopaul Rao Bhow, the general

* The general of Ahalia Bhye, then the head of the Holcar family, and father of Jesswunt Rao Holcar, though himself no relation of the family.

of his rival in that quarter, a series of petty hostilities began, which soon increased to open war.

The widow of Nujuff Khan,* formerly prime minister of the empire, having refused to surrender the fortress of Kanounde to Sindea's officers, Mr. De Boigne detached a brigade, under command of Colonel Perron, a French officer, to reduce the place. It was opposed by the indefatigable Ismael Beg, who, coming to the lady's assistance with his Moghuls, got beaten, and fled into the fort. But foreseeing its fall, and doubtful of the fidelity of the garrison, he gave himself up to M. Perron, on condition of his life being spared. By the firm remonstrances of De Boigne and Perron, his life was saved, but he was sent to the fort of Agra, where, some years afterwards, he died in prison; and thus fell the last of the Moghul nobles of that party.

Soon after the surrender of Kanounde, Gopaul Rao Bhow summoned both Luckwa Dada and

* This nobleman was well aware of the power of De Boigne and his brigades. He told his Begum—the same in question in the text—that if Sindea sent to demand the surrender of the place—to hold out; but if De Boigne or Perron came, to surrender at once; she was persuaded, to own loss, by Ismael Beg to resist.

De Boigne to join him in opposing the progress of Holcar, who mustered, as was understood, 30,000 horse, with four regular battalions of foot, under command of the Chevalier Dudernaig,* a Frenchman, and a numerous artillery. The combined forces of Sindea amounted to 9,000 of the regular brigades, and 20,000 horse, with a suitable proportion of cannon. Holcar at first seemed desirous to avoid a pitched battle; but after several marches and countermarches, De Boigne having ascertained that the enemy was encamped near a forest at the village of Lukhairee, to the westward of Kanounde, resolved to attack them. The conflict, which took place in September 1792, was very bloody, and the most obstinate ever

* The Chevalier Dudernaig was the son of a French naval captain, and is represented as being a man of highly-finished education and agreeable manners. He took service with Holcar, with whom he continued for some time, and afterwards in that of Kassee Rao. But finding the service or the cause a bad one, he left his battalion, and returned to Kotah, under protection of Zalim Sing. Holcar endeavoured to induce Zalim Sing to give him up; but that chief refused to stain his name with infamy by such an act; and the chevalier was permitted, on payment of a small sum, to retire to Hindostan, with all his property, which he did, escorted by a party of Zalim Sing's troops; and he soon after took service in the brigades of Sindea.

witnessed by the general. Early in the day, an unlucky accident had nearly turned the chances against him,—for a shot having struck and caused the blowing up of an open tumbril of ammunition, it was followed by the explosion of twelve more, while the enemy took advantage of the confusion to charge. But the unfailing steadiness and presence of mind of De Boigne, and the perfect discipline of his troops, averted the evil consequences of this mishap. The enemy were checked by a murderous fire, and as they retreated were charged by his own chosen cavalry, and the route became general. Dudernaig's four battalions were all but annihilated; their guns, thirty-eight in number, all taken; and almost all their European officers were killed. The broken remains of Holcar's army repassed the Chumbul with precipitation.

The submission of the Rajah Pertaub Sing, of Jeypore, followed this victory; and after consenting to pay seventy lakhs of rupees, by way of expenses, he received the victorious general at his capital in a style of great magnificence.

The influence of De Boigne with Sindea was now almost paramount. Virtually ruler of Hindostan, in as far as the power of Sindea himself

extended; with no rival to fear, save the British power alone, in Upper India—a power which he always respected—he might now be said to have reached the summit of his ambition. Military fame, influence, and riches, were all his own; and his master himself felt that to him it was that the extraordinary and unhoped for prosperity he enjoyed was due. The use he made of this influence was worthy of him. He promoted the interests of humanity by softening the horrors of war, and tempered the fierce and savage spirit of the Mahratta hordes by the force of that example which he set in the maintenance of a rigid discipline amongst his own corps. Often did he step between Sindea and his hasty wrath, shielding those whom he believed to be innocent or belied, until the storm had passed away, and justice was permitted to have its sway. By his own officers he was honoured and beloved, and he exercised an influence over his men unknown, till then, in the service of any native power.

The term of his service under the great Madhajee was, however, drawing to a close. That able prince died at Wunoulee, near Poonah, in the month of February 1794, at the age of sixty-four, leaving to his grand-nephew, Dowlut Rao

Sindea (for he had no male-heirs), an extent of territory, and an amount of power, which none of his family could ever have hoped to attain. His possessions in the Dekhan and Malwah were tolerably secure and well managed, but across the Chumbul there was no power to contend with his. Rajepootanah was humbled—Hindostan was his own; and the young Dowlut Rao, whose independence even the British Government acknowledged, and to whom the high title of Maharaje was freely conceded, succeeded to an empire which might well take rank with the most powerful native states of the peninsula.

In spite of many brilliant offers made to him from other potentates, General De Boigne had resolved to continue in the service of that prince whose power he had been so instrumental in raising, and which it was his ambition to maintain in its integrity; and Dowlut Rao, who set less value upon his possessions in Hindostan than on those to the southward, was contented to confirm De Boigne in the government and protection of all to the north of the Chumbul.

But the constantly sustained efforts which Mr. De Boigne had kept up for so many successive years began to tell even upon his iron constitu-

tion, and he longed for repose to renew his exhausted health. Sindea, fully sensible of his value, sought still to retain him in his service; but Mr. De Boigne feeling his indisposition increase, persevered in his resolution, and at length received permission to retire, upon the understanding that he should resume his post if returning health should permit.

In February 1796, he accordingly bade adieu to the scenes which possessed so much interest for him, and which had seen him rise to so high a pitch of fame and fortune—to the army he had created, and which had helped him to the eminence he had attained—to the officers who had been his comrades in so many bloody and trying days—and to all the pomp and power he had so long enjoyed. He carried along with him the favour and regret of his master, and the esteem and affection of all who knew him, and proceeded to Calcutta, accompanied by his personal guard of 600 Persian chosen cavalry, the horses and equipments of which were all his own property. These were purchased at once of him by the Governor-General, who also entertained the men. In the month of September he finally quitted India, carrying with him to his native land a vast for-

tune, of which it is understood he has made a noble use.

We cannot better conclude our short notice of this very remarkable man than in the words extracted from a letter of Captain J. Smith, who served with him for a long time :—

"De Boigne is formed by nature to guide and to command. His school acquirements are not much above mediocrity; but he is a tolerable Latin scholar, and reads, and writes, and speaks French, Italian, Persian, Hindostanee, and English, fluently. He is an attentive observer of the manners and dispositions of men,—affable and good humoured, but resolute and firm,—he has entire command over his passions. . . . . On the grand stage where he has acted a brilliant and important part for these ten years, he is at once dreaded and idolized. Latterly, the very name of De Boigne conveyed more terror than the thunder of his cannon,—a singular instance of which I will relate. Nujuff Koolee Khan, in his last moments, advised his Begum to resist, in the fortress of Canound, the efforts of his enemies. 'Resist *them*,' he said; 'but if De Boigne appears, yield.' That this renown was not unfounded, may be gathered from the list of his victories at Agra, at Patun, at Mairtha, at Lukhairee, and many other fields of lesser im-

portance:—he never lost a battle. He will be long regretted in India. His justice was uncommon, and singularly well proportioned between severity and mildness. He possessed the art of gaining the confidence of both princes and subjects; active and persevering to a degree only to be conceived or believed by those who were spectators of his indefatigable labours, he continued at business of the most varied and important character from sunrise to midnight, and this without an European assistant—for he is diffident in placing his trust,—and all this not for one day, but unremittingly for ten years. To this unceasing toil he sacrificed one of the most robust constitutions which ever nature formed. In person he is above six feet high, large limbed, giant-boned, strong featured, and with piercing eyes.

"He raised the power of Madhajee Sindea to a pitch that chief could never have expected, or seriously hoped for; and fixed it on the basis of a powerful, well-disciplined, and well-paid army. . . . . Dowlut Rao Sindea now possesses the largest and best disciplined troops that ever were under a native prince, in the European form; and he may defy, and has defied, the whole Mahratta empire. He has six regular brigades, besides detached battalions; they consist of thirty battalions of Sepoys, and ten of

Nujeebs, of 700 men each; 2,000 regular cavalry, and 200 pieces of cannon; besides this, he has 100,000 Mahratta cavalry, and 2,000 irregular infantry. . . . . All other Europeans have failed in such attempts from want of funds for regular pay. De Boigne saw this error from the first, and prevailed on Sindea to give over in *Jaidad*, Purgunnahs producing twenty lakhs, and these were increased to thirty lakhs a year; and all these Purgunnahs were in the most thriving state from good management.

"One trait of De Boigne should not be passed over in silence. It was his earnest aim to soften, in all ways, the horrors of war. Every officer and soldier, when wounded, received a present of a certain number of days' pay in proportion to the severity of his hurt, without any stoppage during the time of cure; and all disabled received a pension for life, besides an assignment in land, to which the relations of the killed succeed,—no other native power has ever done this."

There is one other fact recorded by Captain Smith, which, to Britains at least, must be interesting. When he first enlisted with Sindea, one of the principal articles of agreement he made with him, and that in writing, was, that he should never be ordered to bear arms against the

English; and this, independent of what related to himself, was ever his advice to that prince.

Such was the commander under whom young Skinner was destined to make his *debut* in arms; but he was not destined long to enjoy this privilege, for he had only entered the service a few months when De Boigne quitted it, and the command of the regular brigades, now largely increased, fell to Colonel Perron. Mr. Perron came to India as a petty officer of a French man-of-war, but, desirous of mending his fortune, he left the navy, and, travelling up the country, first entered the service of the Rana of Gohud, under the orders of Mr. Sangster. After the fall of the Rana, he entered into a corps commanded by Mr. Lestineau, then in the service of Sindea, as quartermaster-serjeant, on an allowance of sixty rupees per month. Mr. Lestineau was supposed to have got possession of Gholaum Kawdir's saddle when he was taken near Meerut, and to have obtained in it the valuable jewels which that miscreant had plundered from the palace at Dehlee; and with this booty, and some money which had been given him to pay his troops, he made his escape to Europe. On this occurrence, Mr. Perron received from Rana Khan the com-

mand of a battalion; but the troops being reduced soon after, he lost this employment. When Mr. De Boigne began to form his brigade, having had experience of Mr. Perron's talents, he gave him command of a battalion called the Boorhanpoor Battalion; and he conducted himself so much to the General's satisfaction, especially at the battle of Patun and at Kanounde, that De Boigne afterwards gave him the command of one of his brigades. He subsequently accompanied Sindea into the Dekhan, and was with him when he died. He then was attached to the young Dowlut Rao Sindea, whose confidence he won,—particularly by his conduct in the battle of Kindla, in the Dekhan, fought in 1795,—so that, when De Boigne resigned his command, and Mr. Frimont, who was his senior officer, died, it followed naturally that he should succeed to the full situation of that officer—in which Sindea accordingly confirmed him. Of Mr. Perron, Mr. De Boigne always entertained a high opinion, and spoke of him with great respect. But, in several matters of politics, his opinions differed widely from De Boigne's, for he entertained as strong a dislike to the British as the General did a partiality; and, instead of following up the sentiment of De

Boigne, of "never to quarrel with the English," Perron made no secret of his disposition to thwart and oppose them in every possible way—a policy which in the end proved fatal to his master as well as to himself.

Colonel Perron, a connection of Perron's, was also a French officer in Sindea's service, to whom De Boigne gave the command of a brigade; and the Chevalier Dudernaig, who, as we have seen, had been at first in Holcar's service, when he came over to that of Sindea, was entrusted with a similar charge by Perron. There were many other officers who had commands in that army, in various ranks,—as Colonels Hessing, Pholman, Sutherland, Drugeon, Frimont, &c.,—who will make their appearance in the sequel; but we shall now turn to the more immediate subject of this narrative, Colonel James Skinner.

CHAPTER III.

Lieutenant-Colonel James Skinner—Early Mahratta troops —Bajee Rao — Moghul troops—Pindarrees —Mahratta armies — Horse — Respectable classes of Indian Horse greatly superior to them—Rajepoots—Instances of their gallantry—Hindostanee Horse—Skinner's Horse—Their high character and efficiency—Sketch of Skinner—His birth—Family—Education—Articled to a printing-office —Disliking it, escapes from his master—Is sent up the country by Colonel Burn—From Cawnpore sent to the Mahratta service, under General De Boigne—Posted to a Nujeeb battalion—General Perron succeeds De Boigne— Commences his service in Bundelcund.

THE name of James Skinner is known to almost every one at all acquainted with India, as that of a gallant and successful soldier, a distinguished leader of irregular horse. And there are few, whom duty or business have led to the north-western provinces, that have not, in some shape or other, experienced his kindness and hospitality. His warm-hearted liberality and generous enthu-

siasm have seldom failed to gain the love and friendship of those with whom he has had any intercourse; while his enterprising gallantry and indefatigable zeal always secured the praise and confidence of his military superiors, and the devoted attachment of his men. Thrown in early youth amongst scenes of high excitement,—of daring adventure and bloody rencontres,—of military pomp and Eastern magnificence; at one time struggling with danger, and privation, and fatigue, —at others, revelling in the short-lived profusion and reckless enjoyment purchased by victory and success, he became the creature of the times and circumstances in which his precarious life was passed; and even when the changes in his eventful career brought him back into contact with his countrymen, there still hung around him an air of barbaric splendour, acquired by his Asiatic habits, which invested him with an interest that few failed to sympathize with as striking and attractive. No one, indeed, especially those possessed of any military enthusiasm, could look upon James Skinner—or, as they called him, "Old Secunder"*—at the head of his fine corps

* This appellation—half name, half *sobriquet*—was given him by the natives, from the similarity of sound between

of horsemen—his "yellow boys," as they were named, from their yellow uniform—and witness their martial air, as they careered about in their wild and rapid manœuvres, without admitting that they were a gallant band,—that, as irregulars, they were unequalled in India, and that the leader and the men were worthy of each other.

In truth, the real character and worth of the more respectable bodies of Indian irregular horse is scarcely comprehended by those who have had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with them, and distinguishing between their various classes; for many classes there are, differing from each other as widely as the purposes they are meant for, and the stuff from which they are formed. In the days of Moghul power and greatness, both cavalry and infantry were raised, maintained, and paid upon a regulated system, which secured the services of good and faithful soldiers. And in the commencement of Mahratta

Skinner, pronounced "*Is*kinner" by them, and Iskunder, which is the name for Alexander; they cannot pronounce the *sk* without prefixing the vowel *i*; and as the idea of Skinner's valour was something extraordinary, they fairly changed his name into Secunder, which is that used for the great Alexander; and by that he became familiarly known throughout the country.

power,—in the days of Sivajee and his immediate successors, when foot soldiers were made use of as well as horse, a similar arrangement was adopted. As the Mahratta tactics assumed their peculiar and predatory character, and the objects of their rapid expeditions were more distant, infantry fell more into disuse, and cavalry, in time, almost entirely superseded it. They thus became a nation of horsemen; and though their chiefs had their villages and jagheers to retire to when the rains prevented them from keeping the field, yet their boast used to be, that "their house was the back of their horse." An anecdote, told in Grant's *History of the Mahrattas*, illustrates well the character and habits of the founders of Mahratta power. When the celebrated Nizam-ool-moolk was opposed to the no less famous Bajee Rao Peishwa, in the first campaign between them, the former sent a famous painter in his service to the army of Bajee Rao, with orders to take his picture in whatever act or attitude he might first find him. The painter, on his return, exhibited a likeness of the Peishwa mounted, with the head and heelropes of his horse in his feeding-bag, like that of a common Mahratta, his spear resting on his shoulder, whilst he was rubbing, with both

hands, some ears of ripened joowaree (a species of grain), which he had plucked from the field, and was eating as he rode.

In later times a change came on, and instead of tying up their horses under the wall of a fort during the rains, and pasturing them in the country round, a regular camp was formed, as Sindea did at Gwalior; and for which, with other departures from the customs of his forefathers, he underwent the grave rebuke of some of the chieftains of the former time, who had seen the growth of power under the old Mahratta system, and augured little good from the change. In these early times, when the Moghuls of the empire were driven from the field by the swarms of Mahratta cavalry, that cavalry was regularly paid, and held under a species of discipline by its own officers; but as the ancient dynasties crumbled to pieces, and spread disorganization over the length and breadth of the land, quarrels and jealousies arose amongst the victors; the robbers fell out about the spoil, and each tried to grasp what he could. Plunder, rather than pay, became the soldiers' object; and the character of the Mahratta troops degenerated accordingly. There continued, no doubt, to be large standing armies, on the old

footing, under such chiefs as a Sumboojee, a Bajee Rao, or a Ballajee, though these were often left largely in arrears; but these armies could not absorb the floating multitudes of lawless troopers which this system of robbery and plunder had called into existence; so that they shifted their services from one chief to another, as each was able to pay or lead his followers to plunder; or, in default of a leader whom they liked, they would plunder in small bands on their own account. And such continued the practice until the whole of Central India became a ruined waste, nursing few besides the robbers who destroyed it. The ordinary army of Madhoo Rao Peishwah is said to have numbered 50,000 good horse, without including the troops of the Bhounslah, the Gaekwar, of Sindea, or Holcar. These consisted either of his own regularly paid troops, or those of the chieftains and Jagheerdars of his own family and clan; his infantry was inconsiderable, and consisted chiefly of mercenaries, who were often discharged at the end of a campaign. The contingents which the four above-named chiefs were bound to furnish has been estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000 more; so that the Mahratta empire, if working together, a case that rarely

ever occurred, might furnish in all about 100,000 good horse. But to these there were always added clouds of Pindarrees and plunderers, such as we have alluded to above, and which are thus well described by the able author we have already quoted:*

"Contrasted with the splendour of the Moghul camp, we may view the horde accompanying one of these freebooters. Differing from the organized bands of Sivajee, but still more destructive to a country,—an irregular assembly of several thousand horsemen, united, by preconcerted agreement, in some unfrequented part of the country. They set off with little provision; no baggage, except the blanket on their saddles; and no animals but led horses, with bags prepared for the reception of their plunder. If they halted during a part of the night, like the Pindarrees of modern times, they slept with their bridles in their hands: if in the day, whilst the horses were fed and refreshed, the men reposed with little or no shelter from the scorching heat, excepting such as might occasionally be found under a bush or tree; and during that time their swords were laid by their sides, and their spears generally stuck in the ground at their horses' heads. When halted on a plain, groups of

* Grant Duff's History of the Mahrattas, vol. i. p. 397.

four or five might be seen stretched on the bare earth fast asleep, their bodies exposed to the noonday sun, and their heads, in a cluster, under the precarious shade of a black blanket, or tattered horse-cloth, extended on the points of their spears. The great object of this class was plunder; and the leaders and their troops, though they sometimes rendered a partial account to the head of the state, dissipated, or embezzled the greater part of their collections."

Thus the army of a Mahratta chief or prince was always a motley body, and but little qualified to resist a resolute foe; for beyond the *Pagah*, or household troops, mounted and armed by the prince and his nobles, and the small number of truly gallant retainers, who went into action resolved to defend their chieftain and his cause, the materials it was formed of were not of a nature to command much confidence. The Sillahdars, a respectable class who furnished their own horses, were not likely to be very forward in exposing their property to danger; and still less was the mere mercenary, whose object was gain from plunder, to risk either life or property where the attainment of his object was doubtful or hazardous. But as, until the introduction of regularly disciplined troops into the service, num-

bers were always imposing if not effective, the quantity of the troops entertained was frequently more studied than the quality, although it often interfered with the efficiency of the actual fighting men. It was this that induced the leaders to permit those clouds of Pindarrees who came in swarms, like vultures, to the battle-field, to encamp on the skirts of the army; and they paid for this sufferance by contributing to these leaders a portion of any plunder they might obtain.

Such bands of marauders were not confined to the Mahratta country—they swarmed over all Hindostan, from the Nerbudda to the Sutlej. Every chief who claimed independence, however ephemeral, had, indeed, his body of horsemen, whom he kept in regular pay, and on whose services he therefore could more or less rely. But when called to defend himself, or wishing to attack others, he enlisted all who came to his standard; and these mercenaries, when they saw but little prospect of pay or plunder, or regarded the cause of their leader as desperate, made no scruple of leaving him, and probably going over to the enemy. Even at the best, they acted rather as foragers for the army, and cutting off supplies from the enemy, than as actual com-

batants; and the unscrupulous manner in which they first supplied their own wants, rendered them often more formidable to their friends than to their foes.

Now all such marauders and mercenaries must be regarded as perfectly distinct from the better and more respectable classes of Indian horse.

Even amongst the Mahrattas, though professedly and emphatically a nation of plunderers, who seek and have achieved conquest not so much by hard-fighting in pitched battles, as by wearing out their prey by incessant desultory and harassing attacks, we find on record instances of the most devoted gallantry exhibited by these large bodies of cavalry; and, to prove this, we need go no further than the disastrous field of Paneeput, where their light-armed horse stood in obstinate and unyielding conflict for hours against the gigantic and well-trained Doorannees. Nor should we find any want of such examples in the brilliant careers of Madhajee, of Ballajee, and Bajee Rao Peishwah.

But if we seek for a picture of chivalrous gallantry, unswerving fidelity, and fearless self-devotion, we have only to turn to the cavalry of the Rajepoot states; and particularly to that of

the Rhattores. We shall there find acts of resolute heroism that have not been surpassed by the troops of any age or country. In the history of their own wars we find repeated instances of bodies of their horsemen dashing themselves against lines of spears and bayonets in the field, and against batteries bristling with cannon, regardless of the havoc in their own ranks made by grape and steel; while, in defence of their fortresses, we find them dying to the last man, rather than accept quarter from their assailants on any terms but such as they deem consistent with military honour,—for it is the *izzut*, the *abroo*, of the Rajepoot, which is dearer to him than life, which instigates him to peril that in its defence; while his devotion to his chief and clan, like that of the Highlanders of yore, makes all sacrifices easy when these are in peril.

A striking instance of this unyielding sense of military honour was given to the writer, by Skinner himself, who had been not only an eye-witness, but personally engaged in the business. A detachment of the British army, marching down the Doab from Anoopsheher, observed at some distance on their flank a small half-ruinous mud fort, called in India a *gurhee*; and which

being occupied, though offering no molestation, it was thought fit to empty of its garrison; and, accordingly, a halt was called to reduce it. Skinner, who was present, observed that it was not worth the trouble of stopping for, and that, if authorized, he would go and bring in the garrison, who probably were Rajepoots, and would evacuate it quietly if civilly treated; but if otherwise, might give some annoyance. The younger officers smiled scornfully at this idea; but the commander told Skinner he might go and tell the garrison to give themselves up as prisoners—they would be too glad to do so—and thus save their lives. Skinner accordingly rode up to the place, alone, and soon brought the garrison to a parley. It consisted of thirteen Rajepoots, who at once agreed to give up the place, provided they were permitted to go free, and carry off their arms. To these terms Skinner agreed, never imagining that any objection could be made to their miserable matchlocks and swords; and they followed him out to the place of halt. But there were young and inexperienced heads there, who scouted the notion that a dozen of miserable wretches should think of terms at all; and the Rajepoots were told they might go about their business,

but their arms they must leave. To this the men objected, urging not only the promise given by Skinner, but their own customs, which made it impossible for them to give up their arms consistently with Rajepoot honour. But their remonstrances were derided, and they were told to "go to the devil," lest worse might befall them. The poor fellows begged hard. They declared they would rather die—that they could not return dishonoured to their families; and that giving up their arms did in fact dishonour them. They even took grass, and, putting it in their mouths,* prostrated themselves, and entreated the British commander to adhere to his agreement. Unhappily, all was in vain; the commander's councillors grew indignant, and again ordered them to be gone, and their arms to be taken from them. But Skinner, who had heard all this with deep mortification, knowing the people well, now stepped forward,—"No," he said; "these people have come in on the faith of my pledge, and you have no right to dishonour me. If you don't like the terms, put them where they were—send them back to their fort, and make better if you can."

* A Hindoo custom, expressive of the most humble submission.

"Well, then," said the thoughtless young men, "do so; let them go back, and see if they will gain by it—what can they do?" "You will soon see that," replied Skinner; "there will be blood before long." Unfortunately, the commander permitted them to return; and the men, their faces instantly brightening up, went back to the fort, exclaiming contemptuously, when they entered it—"Khoob! toomhara lushker lao!" "It is well! now bring on your army!"

A party of twenty men was accordingly told off, and, headed by one of the young men, went on at quick time to the storm. The Rajepoots made not a movement until the party was close to the wall, when every one taking deliberate aim brought down just as many men killed or wounded as they themselves numbered—and amongst the rest lay the young officer. The party, thus disabled, retreated; and, being reinforced, advanced again. Again the Rajepoots gave their fire with equal effect, and then, throwing down their matchlocks and drawing their swords, quietly awaited the assault. They neither barricaded the gateway, nor attempted to defend it; but, the moment the party entered, they fell furiously upon them, careless of themselves, and, cutting to right

and left, killed and wounded numbers,—nor did they desist until all of them lay dead upon the place. The commander, alarmed or curious, now brought up more troops, who, on entering, found the inside of the little fort thickly strewed with their own people, among whom lay the thirteen Rajepoots, all dead and covered with wounds. Thus a piece of headstrong and cruel folly cost not only the life of these brave fellows, but to their own people a loss of three or four times that number.*

The History of Rajahstan, by Colonel Tod, abounds in examples of this high spirit and of patriotic devotion, but we shall only indulge ourselves in giving one more characteristic story, which was told to the writer by an old Rhattore warrior, on the very spot where the incident occurred.

During some of the many wars between the Principality of Marwâr and the Emperors of Dehlee, the Rajah sought to recover the ancient capital of Mandoor, a few miles to the north of Joudpore, from the hands of the Moghuls, who were then in possession of it. But the fortifica-

* In the sequel a somewhat similar incident is related, but upon a more important scale, and, from having wiser people to deal with, with a very different result.

tions were strong, and resisted his efforts, till at last he resolved upon a stratagem which somewhat resembles that of the Trojan horse of old. He hid 500 of his armed warriors in carts of hay and straw, and got these introduced as supplies of forage for the town. The Moghul garrison were so much on their guard as to try every cart as it passed by, thrusting spears through it in several places. The men, of course, were wounded, but instead of letting any token of pain escape them, each man clasped the iron of the spear with his clothes or the hay as they were drawn out, so that no blood should remain upon them, and thus betray the stratagem; and so they passed on unsuspected. We need scarcely add that in the night these resolute men freed themselves from their concealment, and putting to death the sleeping garrison, opened the place to their friends.

But let it not be imagined that such gallantry and self-devotion is confined to Rajepootanah. Those best acquainted with India are the most fully aware that there is no more faithful servant or brave soldier than a respectable Mussulman. The annals of the empire afford sufficient proof of this; and it is well known that to this day it

is to Oude, Rohilcund, the Doab, and the Mahomedan provinces east of the Jumna, that we look for a great portion of our Sepoys. Many a stout and efficient body of horse have these provinces furnished, and so convinced were the European officers who were intrusted with raising brigades of regular troops, and who well knew that quality, not numbers, gave efficiency to an army, that we find every one, from Sangster down to Perron, including the high name of De Boigne, and the no less shrewd and judicious, if less fortunate, George Thomas, all attaching to their regular brigade a corps of Hindostan and Rohilla horse. At the battle of Lukhairee, against Holcar, De Boigne, when the fate of the day was endangered by the blowing up of his tumbrils, restored it, not more by the murderous file-firing of his infantry, than the close and irresistible charge of his small troop of cavalry. In like manner, Thomas, when forced to abandon George-Ghur, by the desertion of many of his other troops, found his chosen band of cavalry stick to him to the last. They cut their way with him through Bourguoin's regulars, and the thousands of Sikh and Mahratta horse, and brought him safe to Hansee; and when at length poor Thomas was forced to yield, they

contemptuously rejected all Perron's offers of service, and some of them, rending their clothes, swore they never would serve any other master, but take to a religious life.

Nor have the British Government found such men less efficient, for many a good and serviceable corps of irregular horse has been raised in the hour of need, and borne their part well in lightening the duty of the regular troops. The deficiency, if any, has arisen from such corps being seldom kept long enough embodied, or receiving sufficient encouragement to give them that consistency, and security of service which is essential to the *morale* of a corps. Without hope of permanent service, the soldier has no stimulus to exertion or self-elevation. Nor is it less essential that the men should know and have confidence in their commander, as well as one another—a thing which can only be the result of experience and long service. It is this, in no small measure, which has made Skinner's horse, so far, the first in India, as all who know them will admit them to be; for, probably, no body of troops had ever greater advantages in these respects. They were the very men whom Skinner himself had commanded while in Perron's army—his old companions in

many a hard-fought day and weary march. Cast adrift by the sudden breaking up of that General's force, they flocked in with delight at the summons of their former and well-loved commander. It was but a return to former habits, former confidence, and dependence; not a man of them but would have risked his life at the least word of his officer; and the result proved the sound judgment of the able general, Lord Lake, who called the corps into being.

They soon were in active service; and during that busy and exciting time, from Lord Lake's first appearance in the Doab to the day when, after annihilating the power of Sindea and Holcar, and reducing every chief in Upper India to such terms as the British Government imposed, the grand army was broken up, and peace was proclaimed throughout the land, never did that most useful corps enjoy a day's repose. First in the advance, it was ever sent ahead to dog the flying enemy, to tell of his whereabouts, to cut off his supplies, or secure provisions for the army; and last in the retreat, its charge was again to watch and check the flying parties that might be hanging on flanks or rear to plunder or intercept supplies.

In the celebrated pursuit of Holcar to the centre of the Punjab, in dogging and baffling Ameer Khan and his Pindarees in their daring inroad on Rohilcund, in bringing up convoys, or foraging for supplies, Skinner's horse were always *hâzir*—always indefatigable; no murmuring, no grumbling, not an instance of insubordination ever harassed their officers, or cast a shade upon the corps, and we believe they will receive from every military man with whom they served this willing testimony, that Skinner's horse were ever remarkable for their orderly and respectful demeanour, that they never failed in a point of duty, and never turned their backs upon an enemy.

It is true that the nature of their service in the British army forbade their being engaged in those desperate and bloody conflicts which many of them had witnessed in the Mahratta service, where large bodies of men were engaged on either side, and the carnage was often dreadful; but on all occasions, when called on to act against the enemy, they acquitted themselves in a manner that called forth the high commendations of their commanders, as we shall see in the sequel. To those who have seen Colonel Skinner and his

3,000 "yellow boys" exercising on the plains of Hansee, it is unnecessary to enlarge on their fine and soldierlike appearance; we need only mention, generally, that the men were picked from amongst thousands of applicants—for Skinner, at any time, had but to beat his drum, and hang out his colours, to bring a host of old soldiers around him. They were chosen with reference to character as well as to physical qualifications, and a bad man never was long retained. Their horses were all well sized and serviceable animals, fully trained to their work; and there was always a considerable number of *bargeers*, or household horse, belonging to the officers and the commander, who were picked and confidential men. All were well trained to the exercise of the spear, the matchlock, and the sword, in each of which their leader and his brother excelled; and to see, as the writer has often done, this large body of bold and active men, in their handsome uniforms of yellow tunics, with red turbans, and girdles edged with silver, their black shields and long spears, charging in line, or breaking into divisions, and wheeling and careering in their various evolutions, with equal rapidity and precision—firing and loading, and firing again, all at speed, and seldom missing their

mark,—to see all this was truly a spirit stirring sight. And if they wanted something of that exquisite uniformity which is the characteristic of a well-drilled line of regular troops, a candid observer might confess that there was no deficiency of steadiness, or of that sober business-like aspect which vouches for readiness and efficiency.

Such was the corps which Skinner was destined hereafter to raise and command. But at the period when this Memoir commences, the times were as different as his circumstances. India in those days—before the dazzling victories of Wellesley and Lake had shed their lustre on the British arms—though broken, as we have said, into fragments, still retained a gleam of that ancient and peculiar splendour which distinguished it from all other lands, as the court of Dehlee transcended all other courts in riches and magnificence. The Moghul power had fallen, and the glory of its throne had become dim; but it still retained a tone of glowing interest—"a glittering halo hovering o'er decay," that, like the haze of a golden sunset, shed a saddened twilight over its last hours. The spell had not been quite broken; it was still a land of magnificent romance. The old Moghul families of the empire had not altogether

vanished from its soil; and our countrymen, the actors in those times, maintained, with many of the representatives of the most distinguished families of the old courtiers, a friendly intercourse, which was as interesting as it was wise and politic. The long succession of military enterprises which marked the wars between the native princes, and which were only terminated by the British conquests in the north-western provinces, were still fresh in the minds of men; the names of the celebrated actors in these scenes were still, "like household words, familiar in their mouths"; and their actions and history formed the great and most captivating subject of social converse. In all these subjects, Skinner, who in the course of his military career had borne no inconsiderable part in them, was of course well skilled, and his friends may well remember, as the writer does, how admirably, yet unassumingly, he fought over his many fields, and what a fund of anecdote he would pour forth, both of those who had fallen and those who yet survived. It was his joy to assemble a knot of friends at his hospitable home at Dehlee, or at Hansee, the headquarters of his corps, where, for many years after the more active part of his career was past, he lived in a style more suited

to his warmth of heart than to his moderate means; and many a pleasant day, and week, and month was spent with "old Secunder," in the pastimes or pursuits which then made India so delightful, and which he so well knew how to promote. The joyous excursions that were made amongst the interesting environs of Dehlee, when pitching our tents amidst ruins that extend for twenty miles around it—now at the noble mausoleum of Hoomayoon, now at the gigantic pillar of the Coutub, or again, amongst the Cyclopean walls and speaking silence of the old grey city of Toghlucabad, we used to wander and explore day after day, till the evening saw us all gaily seated round our well-spread table, and, hookahs in mouth, enjoying the comforts of excellent fare, and no less pleasant converse,—these were enjoyments which none who partook of them will ever forget. It was at these happy times that the rare and attractive qualities of our host would come freely forth—that his warm-hearted kindness, his devoted friendship, his boundless liberality, and unaffected simplicity, appeared in their full force. In truth, it was singular to see that childlike simplicity united with so sound a judgment and so feeling a heart, with so firm and resolute a

mind. Often would the tears start into his eyes, and his voice falter, when listening to some touching story, or some brave or generous act; yet at the call of duty he could be as stern as the occasion required. Few, indeed, on a casual glance at Skinner, would have detected in his round good-humoured countenance the bold soldier of so many fights—the daring leader of the far-famed "yellow boys." In truth, his outward man had but little to attract, beyond the excellent expression of his face, its bright dark eye and beaming smile, for his complexion was very dark, and his figure, though active and athletic, scarcely exceeded in height the middle size. It was at the head of his corps that both face and figure became lighted up with the military ardour which glowed in his heart; at other times his manners were plain and simple, though ever courteous and gentle. Kind and affable to his dependants, he won their attachment and fidelity. Strict, as well as liberal, with his men, they dreaded his displeasure, while they were devoted to his person. Benevolent and charitable to all who required his aid—his left hand, in scripture phrase, often not knowing what his right hand did—he was universally loved and esteemed; and let who will come

after him, there is none in the wide countries through which he was known, native or European, who will be longer remembered, and more regretted, than "Old Secunder Sahib." We now commence his history, and in his own words.

I was born in 1778. My father was a native of Scotland, in the Company's service; my mother was a Rajepootnee, the daughter of a zemindar of the Bojepoor country, who was taken prisoner at the age of fourteen, in a war with Rajah Cheit Sing, I believe near Bejaghur in the Benares district. My father, then an ensign, into whose hands she fell, treated her with great kindness, and she bore him six children—three girls and three boys. The former were all married to gentlemen in the Company's service; my elder brother, David, went to sea; I myself became a soldier; and my younger brother, Robert, followed my example.

In the year 1790, my poor mother died. She could not endure that her two daughters should be forced from her and sent to school. She conceived that by their being taken from her protection, the sanctity of the Purdeh* was violated,

* That is, the purdeh, or *curtain* of the harem, which

and the Rajepoot honour destroyed; and, apprehensive of their disgracing themselves, from being removed from the care of all their female relatives, contrary to the custom of the Rajepoots, she put herself to death.

After this event, Robert and myself were sent to a charity-school, as my father, being still but a lieutenant, could not afford to pay board for us. In 1794, my father having obtained the rank of captain, we were removed to a boarding-school, and I believe he could then afford to pay thirty rupees a month for each of us. In the beginning of 1796, I was bound apprentice for seven years to a printer, and was sent to the office to learn the business.

On the first night of my entrance I was kept up till two next morning, daubing the printing blocks with ink, along with several other boys. Next day I was set to learn the alphabet, and the art of putting the letters together in a brass plate. At night I was again sent to the same work as on the previous one. This disgusted me, and I determined to run away and go to sea. On the

shuts out the females of the family from view of all but their husbands or children. To violate this is to dishonour a female.

third night, accordingly, I clambered over the walls of the house, and off I set, with only four annas (eightpence) in my pocket. For six days I made these four annas support me, wandering about the bazars; and at length, when I had no more, I worked with any one who would hire me well. For several days I got my living by carrying loads, or pulling the driller for the native carpenters, at the rate of two annas a day. But while thus supporting myself, I was surpised by a servant of my eldest sister's husband, who laid hands on me and took me to his master. From him I got a great scolding, and was sent to his office and put to copy law papers, for which work I received my daily food. In this way I remained three months, when Colonel Burn,* who was my godfather, arrived in Calcutta. He called on Mr. T., and, on asking how I was getting on, received from that gentleman a very sorry report,—in fact, he declared I was a good-for-nothing fellow, and not worth my salt. The colonel, after reprimanding me for my idle conduct, asked me what line of life I wished to follow? My answer was,—"That of

* An officer in the Company's service, who afterwards distinguished himself in the Mahratta war, the siege of Dehlee, &c.; and who always continued to be Skinner's friend.

a soldier or sailor." On this he gave me 300 rupees, and bade me get into a small boat and go up the river to my father at Cawnpore, whither he would soon follow, and get me employment.

Accordingly, a few days afterwards, I started, and arrived at Cawnpore in April 1796, where I found my father. He was glad to see me; and Colonel Burn, who arrived about fifteen days after me, gave me a letter to General De Boigne, who commanded the Mahratta army at Coel. I arrived there early in June, and, having presented my letter of recommendation, was very kindly received by the General, who gave me an ensign's appointment on 150 rupees per month, and sent me to the 2nd brigade at Muttra, then commanded by Colonel Sutherland, a Scotchman. By him I was posted to a Nujeeb battalion of matchlocks, under command of Captain Pholman.

At this time Juggoo Bappoo was the Mahratta commander-in-chief; De Boigne had thirteen battalions under him. I remained at Muttra several months, during which time General De Boigne left the Mahratta service, and retiring to the Company's territory, went home. The command of the regular troops, at that time in Hindostan, thus devolved upon Colonel Sutherland;

while that of the first brigade, then in the Dekhan, fell to Captain Perron.

The change which thus took place occasioned the march of the whole troops at Muttra towards Bundelcund, where Lukwa Dada, with 20,000 Mahratta horse, and the second brigade, composed of eight battalions, 300 regular Sowârs (cavalry), 1,000 Rohillas, 600 Mewattees, and fifty pieces of cannon, had taken the field. We continued six months out in Bundelcund, reducing several refractory petty Rajahs; and during this time I saw my first service, being present at two field battles, and at the taking of five or six forts. This increased my *shouq* * (earnest taste) for soldiering; and I made it my study to become a proficient in all the Hindostanee modes of warfare. I gave all my time to learning to play the Mahratta spear, to archery, and the sword exercise on foot: and in a few months I found the value of these arts. I also laid myself out for getting acquainted with the native chiefs, and they soon began to take a liking for me. At this time Captain Perron was promoted to the rank of a colonel; and received the appointment, from

* A very common and very expressive Hindostanee word for "a strong ruling passion."

Dowlut Rao Sindea, of commander of all the regular forces in Hindostan. He therefore set off for Muttra, where he arrived on the 1st of February 1797, and was very kindly received by Juggoo Bappoo, the Mahratta commander.

CHAPTER IV.

Quarrel between Dowlut Rao and his Uncle Madhajee's widows—Conduct of Shirjee Rao Ghalkay occasions discontent among the Mahratta chiefs—Country laid waste—Sindea's army beaten—Retreat at Shair Ghur—Skinner's gallant conduct—And promotion—Army assembles to oppose Luckwa Dada and discontents at Chittore Ghur—Adventure with Hurjee Sindea—His gratitude and generosity—Reports of Zeman Shah—Affghans' invasion—Causes hostilities to cease—Siege and capture of town and fort of Jhajeghur—Assault and capture of Bujgarrah—Mahratta armies march towards Dehlee to oppose Zemaun Shah—He retires towards Cabool, and armies break up.

THE next portion of Colonel Skinner's narrative relates to an event which, without some explanation, might be unintelligible to those unacquainted with Mahratta history; and which raised a storm against Dowlut Rao Sindea that threatened to involve him in ruin.

When Madhajee Sindea died, he left three

widows; one of whom, Bhagirthee Bhye, was young and beautiful. Dowlut Rao, at that time the acknowledged heir and adopted son of his uncle, promised to make ample provision for these ladies. They accordingly continued to reside in his camp; but no steps were taken to ensure them a permanent establishment, and soon they found some of their ordinary comforts circumscribed.

Still no complaint appears to have escaped them; when suddenly it was discovered, or alleged at least, by the elder widows, that a criminal intercourse subsisted between Sindea and the youngest,—an atrocity which they denounced with the utmost abhorrence; and declared that they could no longer regard as a son a person whom they deemed guilty of an incestuous crime. An officer, lately entered into Sindea's service, named Shirzee Rao Ghatkey*—an active and bold intriguer—attempted to interfere;

* This man, whose character and name is held in utter detestation, had a daughter very handsome, for whom Sindea conceived a passion so strong that he made her his wife, greatly to the disgust of his family and court, as Shirzee, or Surjee Rao, was neither respectable by birth nor character. This, however, gave him a great influence over Sindea, which he made use of for the worst purposes.

but the ladies denied him admittance into their presence; upon which the miscreant, having forced the enclosure of their tents, seized, flogged, and barbarously degraded them. The Shenwee Brahmins,—who held the principal offices under the government of Madhajee, and many of whom were connected by relationship, as well as by caste, with the ladies,—indignant and disgusted, espoused the cause of the two Bhyes; and after much dissension it was agreed that they should proceed to take up their abode at Boorhanpoor, where they were to be provided with a suitable establishment, and funds for its support.

They accordingly departed from Poona; but, instead of taking them to Boorhanpoor, their escort was directed to place them in confinement at Admednuggur. This treachery being immediately discovered by their adherents in camp, they had scarcely reached Korygaom, on the Beema, when Moozuffur Khan, a Patan officer, in the interest of the Shenwee Brahmins, who commanded a choice body of Hindostanee horse in Sindea's service, suddenly assailed the escort, rescued the ladies, and brought them back to the neighbourhood of Sindea's camp. Sindea did not dare attempt to punish this daring act, from dread of

the possible consequences, which might have subjected him to disgrace and odium throughout the whole Mahratta country. But, yielding at length to the evil counsels of Ghatkey, that officer received permission to act against them. Moozuffur Khan, being informed of this, withdrew the ladies to the camp of the Peishwah's brother, Amrut Rao, who instantly afforded them his protection; and the Khan no sooner had deposited his charge in safety than he turned upon Ghatkey, who had pursued them, routed his party, and returned in triumph to the camp of Amrut Rao.

On the 7th of June, Sindea sent five battalions of regular infantry, under a French officer, Du Prat, to surprise the camp of Amrut Rao, and carry off the Bhyes; but he failed, and was driven back with loss. Negotiations ensued; a suitable provision and place of residence were again promised to the Bhyes; and Amrut Rao, not doubting Sindea's sincerity, took up his ground at the Kirkee bridge, near Poonah. No sooner, however, had he thus been thrown off his guard, than Ghatkey, taking with him Mr. Drugeon, a French officer, with two brigades of infantry, came, on pretence of preserving order, during the Mahomedan festival of the Mohumum,

and suddenly opening a fire from twenty-five guns on the unsuspecting troops of Amrut Rao, advanced, charged, and dispersed them, and totally pillaged their camp.

This insulting outrage threatened an open war between the Peishwah and Dowlut Rao Sindea. Kassee Rao Holcar, glad of the opportunity of dealing a blow to his rival, took part with the Peishwah; who immediately concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the Nizam, with whom he had previously been at war. Sindea, now seriously alarmed, requested the mediation of the British Government, which had previously been rejected. Colonel Palmer accordingly endeavoured to bring round an accommodation; but the Bhyes, supported by their party, now strengthened by the Peishwah himself, became so extravagant in their demands that nothing could be done. Both princes now endeavoured to enter into negotiations with Tippoo, the Sultan of Mysore; but the events which now came thickly on tended, of themselves, to bring about a reconciliation between these two important chieftains of the Mahratta nation. The English, having resolved on war with Tippoo, concluded a treaty with the Nizam, and endeavoured to do

the same with the Mahrattas. But the Peishwah, especially, was of too jealous a disposition, and too narrow a mind, to take any such decided step; and even the fall of Tippoo, which so soon took place, tended but to give birth to a deeper scheme of deception on their part,—a system which terminated in their own disgrace and ultimate ruin. Another circumstance contributed, for the time at least, towards an apparent reconciliation between the Peishwah and Sindea. Ghatkey, the person whose insolence had been the cause of the rupture, having continued his excesses to a height which looks like madness, and evinced a decided contempt for his master's authority, was seized and disgraced.* This was regarded as a concession to the wounded honour of the Peishwah's family. But the effect of the treatment of the Bhyes upon the affairs of Sindea himself continued to be seriously damaging. After the

* Even this act of justice and policy was only effected by a surprise—in fact by a stratagem; a proof of the power of the minister, and the weakness of his master. It was not till more than ten years afterwards, that, in resisting a second attempt to arrest him, he was speared by one of the officers sent on that duty,—an act, probably, very grateful to Sindea, who felt great remorse for the crimes he had been led to commit by the counsels of this monster.

treacherous attack upon Amrut Rao's camp, they had fled to the Rajah of Kolapore, who then was at variance with the Peishwah; and there they were joined by Narrain Rao Bukhshee and the principal Shenwee Brahmins from Sindea's camp, of whom Lukwa Dada, a favourite and able officer of that prince's, was one of the most important. Large bodies of horse flocked to them, and soon there was not a village of Sindea's—from the Kishtna to the Godavery—which was not plundered or attacked; and himself insulted, even in his lines.

Sindea attempted in vain to oppose them; his horse were inferior; and no sooner had the regular battalions, sent to repress their attacks, returned to their camp, than the insurgents faced about and followed them. The whole of the Peishwah's territory was swarming with predatory horsemen, and exhibited a scene of utter anarchy. The flame spread to Hindostan: Luckwa Dada, being deprived of power and dismissed from office, was driven to the ranks of the insurgents; where, raising a powerful army, he repeatedly defeated the troops sent against him, and reduced all the country from Oojein to Seronje. It is at this juncture that Skinner, then,

by his own good conduct, having been entrusted with the charge of a battalion, takes up the story of this insurrection.

"The Bhyes," he says, "had come to Kotah, with several respectable chieftains of his uncle's, the Old 'Pateill'* (Madhajee Sindea). They mustered 20,000 horse, and about fifteen Mahratta battalions, and twenty pieces of cannon. Luckwa Dada, who was at Karoulee, near Agra, with about 5,000 horse, left Juggo Bappo, and joined the Bhyes. A large force was ordered to assemble at Gwalior, to oppose this army of the Bhyes, under command of Ambajee Engliah. Captain Butterfield was ordered from our brigade with two battalions, one of which was under my command, and ten pieces of cannon. We joined Ambajee at Parie, twenty côs west of Gwalior, and found there a brigade, under command of a native in that chief's service, named Colonel Kaleb allee; four battalions, under Kootub Khan, in the same service, and about 15,000 Mahratta horse, under Ambajee's son, called Bhow.

* Madhajee, who was too politic to publish his aspirations after empire, would never allow himself to be called anything than *Patail*, or *Patuel*, which signifies the chief of a village or district.

One force thus consisted of about 15,000 horse, fourteen battalions of infantry, and thirty pieces of cannon. We marched to Kotah under the command of Bhow, and overtook the Bhyes army at a place called Chaundkhoree, south-west of Kotah. We came up with the enemy in the morning. Luckwah, my old master, was made commander of all the Bhyes forces, and the whole of our line was commanded by Bhow. The troops faced each other at three P.M.; and, soon after, a tremendous cannonade began. About five, our whole line was ordered to advance, but we soon found that the whole brunt of the battle was to fall on our two battalions, and that both Kaleb allee and Kootub Khan had an understanding with the enemy.

After fighting for two hours, we learned that both these traitors had joined; and, as soon as Bhow perceived it, he galloped up to Captain Butterfield, and directed him to retire and throw himself on the bank of a small river, about a mile in our rear. We commenced retiring by wings, in carrying which point we lost a great many men, but succeeded in effecting our object. Captain Butterfield then directed us to get the men under cover, for the whole of the

enemy's guns were now directed on us, and several charges were made by the Bhyes troops, all of which we managed to repulse, our men being staunch, and our cavalry behaving well.

At seven P.M. Bhow came to us, and a council of war was held, when all agreed to retreat to a fort called Shairghur, about eight côs in our rear. Our loss in the two battalions was about 500 men killed and wounded, out of 1,600. What our cavalry had suffered we could not learn, but report said that their loss must have amounted to 2,000 or 3,000 men; three chiefs of note were killed among them, and one or two more wounded.

We commenced retreating about ten P.M., leaving all our wounded and nearly all our baggage behind us. We had to go through the pass of Shairghur, a côs and a half in length; and this we did not reach till twelve at night, as our gun-carriages were so much shattered that we could move but very slowly. On coming to the pass, I was ordered to remain behind, with two companies and a six-pounder, until the line had cleared the pass. This I accordingly did; and, about two in the morning began to hear the enemy's drums. By this time the line had got

well on through the pass, and I commenced retreating. But I had scarcely gone a mile, when one of the wheels of our gun, which had been much shattered by the enemy's shot, broke down, and it took us an hour to determine what was to be done with the gun. We at length resolved to leave the tumbrils, and with their bullocks to drag on the gun. With this view we threw away the other wheel also, and resumed our retreat.

By this time the enemy's van had come up, and there was nothing left but to abandon the gun, or stand like good soldiers and die defending it. The cry was "not to leave the gun," so I immediately ordered it to be charged with grape, and then for all to remain quiet until the enemy should come to the charge. The pass was narrow, being not above 200 yards broad, and very steep on both sides. The enemy thinking we had retired, their van, composed I think of about 500 men, came up within a hundred yards of us, when we gave them the round of grape and a volley of small arms. We then rushed out upon them, sword in hand, took three stand of colours, and destroyed a great number. They retired in great confusion, and we came back to our gun; then blowing up our

tumbril, we made good our retreat, and joined our detachment under the fort of Shairghur.

Next morning I received great commendation from Captain Butterfield, as well as from Bhow, who likewise gave me a grand khilut (dress of honour); and both made a favourable report of my conduct to Perron. The enemy then began to make their appearance, but we were snug under the walls of our fort, our left flank supported by a fine river called the Goorah Pachor, and our right by the hills.

On the third day the whole of the enemy's army arrived, and we remained thus for a month looking at each other. Skirmishing took place every day, but never anything of consequence. No sooner had the report of our retreat, and of the treachery of the two infantry officers, reached head-quarters, than Juggoo Bappoo and Ambajee in person resolved to come to our assistance with a large army; but whenever Luckwa Dada heard of the approach of this force, he advised the Bhyes to take shelter at Oodeypore. They wrote to the Rana accordingly, who immediately agreed to give them protection, and advised Luckwa to bring the Bhyes and his army to Chitoorghur, where he would join him with all his Rajepoots.

With this advice Luckwa immediately complied, and we were freed from our imprisonment.

Both battalions had suffered so much from casualties, sickness, and desertion, that we had only a thousand men left; so we immediately began to recruit and put our guns in order. Captain Butterfield received a very flattering letter, while I was promoted to the rank of lieutenant, with 200 rupees per month, and we were permitted to refresh ourselves for a month after our fatigues at Shairghur, before recommencing our march against Luckwa.

Ambajee then ordered us to join him at Kotah, which place we reached in fifteen days, and found collected there a large army of every sort of troops. There were about 10,000 horse, and 15,000 infantry, with forty pieces of cannon. Captain Butterfield and I both waited upon Ambajee in our grand khiluts, and the infantry commanders with the natives were put under Captain Butterfield's command. I was made commander of our own two battalions. Colonel Sutherland also with the second brigade, from Muttra, was ordered to join Ambajee at Chittoor, and there we all assembled in the beginning of May.

Luckwa Dada, who was the best Mahratta general of his time, threw himself under the fort of Chittoor Ghur,* having two rivers in his front, and his flanks well defended by hills, which gave him the command of all the country in rear of the fort. His army, with that of the Rajepoots, amounted to about 30,000 horse, of different tribes and castes, besides 20,000 foot and fifty pieces of cannon. Ours now numbered about 20,000 horse, and a regular brigade of infantry, about 8,000 men strong, added to what was with Ambajee.

We encamped in front of Chittoor Ghur, about four côs on the Oodeypore side; and skirmishing and cannonading took place every day, but no attempt was made to cross, as most of the Mahrattas had taken a dislike to Sindea, and had no wish to destroy each other, while at the same time they affected great zeal for his service, and in obeying his orders.

We remained thus for a month; troops pouring in on either side from various quarters: amongst them, George Thomas,† a soldier of fortune, who

* The celebrated family stronghold of the Rana of Oodeypore; a hill fortress, said to be impregnable.

† This celebrated adventurer will be noticed more particularly in the sequel.

at this time had six battalions and twenty guns, hired himself to Ambajee for a salary of 30,000 or 40,000 rupees per month. As we continued thus harassed day after day, supplies became scarce, and the difficulty of getting forage became inconceivable. Cash also failed, and all fell into arrears. To our brigade five or six months pay was now due; to the Mahrattas, I believe, some years' arrears. Plundering became general, insomuch that, instead of fighting, parties from both sides were daily sent out to plunder the Rajepoot country; and the consequence was, that, in the course of a month, every village for fifty côs around was burned and deserted, the Rajepoots or Ryots taking shelter in their large forts.

One morning, as I was exercising my horse, in full armour, I met Hurjee Sindea, with about 500 chosen horsemen, proceeding towards the river, and, riding up, I asked him where he was going. He replied that he had been ordered to find out a ford, and that as soon as he should have done this the army would be ordered to attack the enemy. He then asked me if I would go with him, to which I replied that I should be too happy to do so. I asked him in turn whether he had any guides,

to which he replied that Ambajee had sent two with him.

Now, Hurjee Sindea was a relative of Dowlut Rao Sindea, and both Ambajee and Luckwa Dada were his enemies, and sought his destruction. And it turned out afterwards that the present expedition was a snare laid for that purpose by these two persons. Luckwa had agreed with Ambajee that if he would send Hurjee out with a small party, on pretence of discovering a ford, or to reconnoitre the enemy's grounds, he, Luckwa, would place a large body of cavalry in ambush to destroy him. The guides who were sent with Hurjee were, in reality, spies, who had been sent by Luckwa to Ambajee to arrange the ambush, and lead their victims into it.

These rascals led us towards the bank of the river under Chittoor, on the left flank of Luckwa's army. When we had come within a thousand yards of the river I espied a single horseman on the bank, who immediately, on seeing us, went down and disappeared. I mentioned this circumstance to Hurjee, next whom I was riding, but he replied that he must be a Pindaree. Scarcely, however, had he said this, when we perceived several horsemen appearing from various parts of

the ravines, and in a few minutes they assembled to the number of 1,000 good horsemen, with Balaram, a native chieftain of Luckwa's, at their head.

They instantly charged us, but were repulsed with great loss. This check had an excellent effect, and our men continued quite stanch. Hurjee, who was a noble soldier, called aloud that this was a snare laid for him, but that he put his trust in God, who would assuredly defend him from all his enemies. The men cried out that they were all ready to die for him. He then gave the word for a deliberate and orderly retreat; and we fell back skirmishing for about a côs, when Balaram, heading his men, brought them again to the charge. We repulsed this attack also, but my mare was wounded by a sabre cut, and I received two or three sword blows on the body, from which I was only saved by my armour. Hurjee, who was also in armour, received a spear wound in his right arm. I happened to be close by when this occurred, and cut down the man who speared him. But in this attack we lost some of our best sowars, and one or two Indians of note and courage. We still had two côs between us and our camp, and Balaram had become

furious—charging us still on all sides. Our party now began to lose ground, the retreat began to be a flight, the soldiers to be disobedient to orders, and poor Hurjee Sindea to get confused. Balaram himself appeared in our rear, pressing us close, with about seventy or eighty sowars. On seeing this, Hurjee Sindea called aloud to the few who remained close to him, amongst whom I had the good fortune to be, telling them not to run like cowards, but to die like Rajepoots; that he well knew that Balaram, who was leading the party in his rear, and that he never would fly from him. About fifty men turned with him, and with this handful of heroes he made a desperate push, and cut down Balaram himself, while others levelled several of his sowars with the ground; the rest fled on all sides, and we began once more to retreat with coolness. As soon as the rest of our pursuers knew that their chieftain had fallen, they began to draw up, and soon gave over following us. We now had not more than 200 men left, with whom we pursued our way to camp, and reached it unmolested. Had it not been for my armour I should have been cut to pieces this day, but my mare, less fortunate, received several cuts.

When close to camp I made my salaam, and a movement to retire; but Hurjee said, "No, you must come to my tent." I followed accordingly, and we all sat down in the Durbar tent. Hurjee then rose, and embracing me, said, "All those men who fought with me this day were my servants, and did but their duty; but you are my friend, and fought for me as a friend." He then took a pair of golden bangles, set with diamonds, and put them round my wrists, and presented me with a sword, a shield, and a very fine Dekhinee horse—all of which gratified me very much. I thanked him for his kindness, and declared that, though but a poor soldier, I was as much his servant as I was of Dowlut Rao's. He then gave me betel, as is the custom of the Mahrattas when they permit a soldier to retire, and assured me he never would forget me.

Colonel Sutherland, who had heard the whole circumstance, and also that I had been with Hurjee, now sent for me, and I related to him all that had happened, explained how I had chanced to accompany him, and showed him the present I had received. He blamed me for what had passed, and told me he should report to Perron the circumstance of my accompanying the Mahratta

chief without orders. On returning to my tent, it was intimated to me that if I would give the horse I had got, and which was a noble animal, to the colonel, he would say nothing of what had happened, to Perron. To this I replied, that I might give the bangles, but with the sword, the shield, and the horse, I would not part; and though several schemes were had recourse to by Colonel Sutherland, in order to obtain the animal, he did not succeed in depriving me of him. On the other hand, Hurjee himself had written to Perron describing my conduct, and I received direct from that gentleman, in consequence, a letter of thanks—a circumstance which greatly annoyed Colonel Sutherland. But, ere long, the colonel himself was discovered intriguing with the Mahratta chiefs, and Perron discharged him, bestowing his command upon Captain Pholman, who was promoted to be major. About the same time Captain Butterfield also quitted the service.

Whilst we were thus amusing ourselves at Bhittoor, accounts were received that Zemaun Shah, the Affghan, had arrived with a large army to invade Hindostan. This news made the Mahrattas all friends in a few days. Visits

passed between Luckwa and Ambajee; and the whole army, combined, marched forth into a fine plain near Nauthdewarra, north of Chittoor. Sindea sent orders for having the Bhyes* conducted to Gwalior by Ambajee, with an escort of 5,000 horse; and, as soon as he was gone, Luckwa Dada was proclaimed commander-in-chief, a measure which pleased all the troops, both Mahrattas and Europeans, for they all knew him to be an able, generous, and excellent soldier.

Luckwa gave orders that the different chiefs should march and join Juggoo Bappoo at Muttra, where all the troops were ordered to assemble. We remained in the rear with the second brigade and 20,000 horse. George Thomas marched towards Hansee, his capital, which had been given

* Frequent negotiations were entered into with these ladies, but were as often broken off; either by suspicion of treachery on their part, or their own overweening pretension. The affairs of Sindea in Malwah remained also in a very uncertain state; but to follow their course would occupy too much space, and lead us from the immediate subject in hand: those, therefore, who desire to learn more on the struggles of these times, may have recourse to the very able work of Mr. Grant Duff's, the "History of the Mahrattas," and Sir John Malcolm's "Central India."

him by Appa Kundoo Rao. After all the various parties had left us, we commenced our march towards Muttra, at the rate of five or six côs a day.

When we arrived at Shahpoorah, Zalim Sing, the Kotah Rajah's *karinda*,* who had accompanied us with two of his battalions, offered Luckwa Dada a large sum if he would take a fort called Jhajeghur, eight côs east of Shahpoorah, and belonging to a Rajepoot chieftain named Kasree Sing, who was always giving annoyance to the Kotah chief. This fort was situated on an immense hill, having under it a large town also well fortified, and with some 5,000 good Rajepoot defenders.

Kasree Sing was related to the Shahpoorah Man, who interested himself much in his behalf,—but not being able to pay more than the Kotah Rajah, we marched against Jhajeghur, and on the second day sat down before it, and encamped about four miles from the town. Kasree Sing was summoned to give up the fort, which being refused, preparations were made for attacking the town. Six battalions of our brigade, and 10,000 from the Mahratta and Kotah troops, were

* Agent, factor.

ordered to march with a large battering train. Next morning we arrived within a thousand yards of the town, and opened our trenches, without a shot being fired by the enemy.

In the course of twenty-four hours, the batteries of our brigade, consisting of six 18-pounders, four 12-pounders, and two mortars, were reported to Captain Donnelly (an Irishman) as ready. The battalions also had got into cover, and Donnelly reported the same to Luckwa, who was present with the troops. He told us that we must wait a day, as there was some hopes that Kasree Sing would give up the fort. At daybreak, however, next morning, orders were issued to commence the attack; and our batteries opened, as well as the guns of the Mahrattas.

For six hours the enemy let us have it all our own way, without returning a shot, when a ghole* of Rohillas of 800 men, belonging to the Mahrattas, imagining that it was fear that prevented the Rajepoots from firing, pushed on and took possession of a height about a hundred yards distant from the walls of the town. On this, about 100 Rajepoots sallied out, and drove them from the height like so many sheep, with the loss

* Means a body, a troop,—from keeping together.

of fifty or sixty men; and the fort opened all its cannon on us, keeping up a very smart fire for about two hours, when they ceased.

Next morning at nine o'clock, the breaches were reported practicable, and a general storm was ordered to take place immediately. The signal, a discharge of five guns from Luckwa's tent, was given about an hour after the orders reached us, and the whole of the troops moved out in six columns. The different points of attack were indicated, and every commanding officer led on his column, Luckwa Dada himself being present, and giving his orders in person; but the Rajepoots only gave us a few rounds from their matchlocks as soon as we got near the walls, and then retired into the fort. Thus, the taking of the town did not cost much bloodshed, our loss in killed and wounded being only from the matchlock fire, and did not exceed 200 men.

We now commenced regular approaches against the fort. The Mahrattas took the east side, leaving the west to us. It took us fifteen days to get within two hundred yards of the fort, and during that time there were many desperate sallies made by the Rajepoots. They sometimes succeeded in these, at other times got well beaten.

The breach having been effected, a general storm was ordered to be made, by about 10,000 men, in four different columns. Our six battalions were formed into two columns, of which one was commanded by Major Pholman, and the other by Captain Donnelly. The Mahrattas were formed, I believe, into four columns, under native commanders. The signal of advance was to be the lighting of a port-fire. This was seen a little before dawn, and we moved out immediately on all sides, under a tremendous fire from the Rajepoots, kept well up from small arms and cannon. When we reached the walls, the breaches were found to be impracticable. We persevered, nevertheless, though at infinite disadvantage. They first rolled large stones down upon us, and then powder-pots, on which were thrown grass and chuppers (large pieces of thatch from houses), which caused much havoc. For two hours we stood this and a heavy fire, and then were forced to retreat, with great loss. I was wounded in the hand early in the business, while standing under the wall, and protecting myself with my shield against the powder-pots. A matchlock ball passed through the shield and the palm of my right hand, which held it. Captain Donnelly and

Lieutenant Exshaw were killed, and Lieutenant Turnbull wounded. Our six battalions lost 1,000 men in killed and wounded, besides our two officers killed, and two wounded. The Mahrattas suffered still more than we did, for the Rajepoots sallied out upon them sword in hand, and drove them back to their trenches, and several chiefs of note were killed. The Rajepoots were believed to have lost only from 300 to 400 men, but we could not ascertain the truth.

For four days after this we remained quiet, just amusing the Rajepoots from our trenches. But, on the evening of the fourth day, a body of 2,000 of them, in two parties, made a sally on the trenches, from which one of the parties succeeded in driving us. But Lieutenant Vickers,* who commanded in one of our trenches, beat them back, and followed them into the fort. When the Mahrattas saw this, a general storm from all quarters took place. The Rajepoots defended themselves like heroes, but they were utterly beaten and cut to pieces, all except Kasree Sing, who, with about 1,000 that remained, took

* Afterwards in Holcar's service, and put to death by him, wishing to quit it on the approach of war with the English.

refuge in a small ghuree, or keep, with four bastions, that was in the centre of the large fort. When Luckwa Dada, who was a brave man, came in and saw the carnage, he praised the Rajepoots as noble fellows who ought to be saved, and he ordered Pholman to make any terms he liked with them. Lieutenant Vickers was accordingly sent to treat with them, and the Rajepoots at once said that if Colonel Pholman would give them his word that they should be allowed to march out with their arms, they would give up the ghuree; otherwise, they would blow it up, with all their wives and children, and die, sword in hand, like good Rajepoots.

On this, Pholman ordered a cessation of all hostilities, and, going up to the gate, gave them his word that he would see them and their wives and families, with their arms, safe to Shahpoorah, and promised to leave with them Lieutenant Vickers, as a hostage for the performance of this capitulation. This being accepted by them, Colonel Pholman, next morning, procured hackerees, camels, and bearers, for their baggage and families, and Lieutenant Vickers received orders to escort them, with his battalion, to Shahpoorah; all of which was duly performed.

In this place Luckwa Dada made prize of powder and lead, grain and cannon, to the value of five lakhs of rupees, besides what he received from Zalim Sing for reducing the fortress. It was then given up to him; and we, after a few days' rest, marched for Muttra, assaulting and taking on our way several other Rajepoot forts, and making the owners pay large sums to get them back. The only one among them of consequence, and which gave us trouble, was a fortress called Bujgarrah, in assaulting which we lost 1,000 men.

In July 1797, we arrived at Muttra, where we were very kindly received by both Juggoo Bappoo and Colonel Perron,—both native and European officers of our brigade receiving khiluts, as well as the Mahrattas.

In September, we marched towards Dehlee, to oppose the progress of Zeemaun Shah, who was still at Lahore; and Mahrattas and troops of every description began to pour in from all quarters. We halted at a place called Shairghur, near Horall, half-way to Dehlee, where I believe there were collected of Mahratta horse at least a lakh, with 200 pieces of cannon. Sindea also marched from the Dekhan with an immense army. Colonel

Perron directed Major Pedron, at Coel, to raise another brigade with all possible expedition. And the English collected a large army at Anoopsheher, under General Craig.* Had Zeemaun Shah advanced, we had orders to join the English. But after a stay of two months at this place (Horall), news came, that, in consequence of some disturbances in Cabool, the Shah had marched back to his own territories; so we returned to Muttra, and the different armies went to their homes.

The new brigade, raised by Major Pedron, was, however, completed, and the command of it was bestowed on that officer.

* Afterwards Sir James Craig.

CHAPTER V.

The Rajah of Jeypore refuses his tribute—Luckwa Dada sent with an army to demand it—Mahratta army assembles at Mallpoorah—Character of the various troops—Rajah's army assembles at Sanganeir—Great display made by the Rajah Luckwa—Address to his troops—Skirmishing—The battle—Chevalier Dudernaig's brigade destroyed by Rhattore horse—Rajah defeated—Anecdote of his mother—Description of Rajah's encampment—Plunder—The Mahee Muratib—Loss on either side—Luckwa Dada—Rewards for gallant conduct—Visit to the Rajah—City of Jeypore—Magnificent entertainment—Nuzzers and Kheluts—

In January 1798, the Jeypore Rajah, Pertaub Sing, having refused to pay the tribute he owed to Sindea, Luckwa Dada marched to compel him to return to his allegiance. Luckwa had 20,000 Mahratta horse; our second brigade was ordered from Muttra; General Dudernaig, who had left the service of Mulhar Rao Holcar, and entered that of Sindea, was ordered with his brigade from

Rampoorah; four battalions with their guns were sent from Kotah; some infantry and horse from Gwalior; and troops were sent by certain other small Rajahs, tributary to Sindea, according to their ability. The whole met at Mallpoorah, to the south-west of Jeypore, and amounted, at the lowest calculation, to 60,000 horse, 40,000 infantry, and about 150 pieces of cannon, besides 10,000 Ghosains, called Nagas, armed with rockets.

Rajah Pertaub Sing also began to collect his troops to oppose us, and sent his tents, artillery, and brigades, out to Sanganeir. Here we remained a month in camp, vakeels passing backward and forwards continually; and here I was gratified by meeting a number of my old Mahratta friends,—and, amongst the rest, Hurjee Sindea, who gave me every morning regularly a lesson at the Mahratta spear-exercise; in fact, perfecting myself in soldiering was my only pleasure. Luckwa Dada had taken a great liking to me; and I made myself well-known amongst the Mahratta chieftains, whom I found a good, generous-hearted race of men. The Hindostanee officers, and chieftains in their service, on the other hand—such as Moghuls, Pathans, and others of the Mahomedan castes—seemed to me

proud, cunning flatterers, and great bullies too. A few Seyeds of note, and some Bopal Pathans, who were respectable, formed the only exceptions to this description in this immense army. But the most abominable race I ever saw were the Rohillas, from Rampore. Arrant cowards, they would rush onwards where they met with no opposition; but whenever checked, they would run like jackalls. The Rajepoots were far the first for cool courage; but they were not active. As for the officers in our regular infantry, we had them of all nations—French, English, Germans, Portuguese, and country born, of English fathers.

Towards the end of March, we heard that the Jeypore Rajah had arrived at his camp at Sanganeir, and his troops assembling daily. The spies reported that there were 50,000 Rajepoot horse—10,000 of which were Rhattores, commanded by Sewan Sing, the Chela* of the Jhoudpore Rajah, who would not himself join Pertaub Sing, on

* Sir J. Malcolm explains the term "Chela" to be a person who is adopted or admitted into a family on the terms of a dependant relation—a confidential dependant. —*Central India*, vol. i. p. 365. It sometimes means a disciple.

account of what was regarded by the high caste Rajepoots his disgraceful conduct in giving up Vizier Allee to the English, after promising him protection.* The rest of this cavalry were Kutchawutees, Hurrowtees, and Shekawuttees. The other principal Rajahs followed the Jhoudpore man's example, except the Ooneara Rajah, who was a near relation. There were, besides, about 50,000 regular infantry, and 20,000 irregulars on foot—Rajepoots, Meenas, and Bheels; so there was no saying on which side the victory might light; but the Mahrattas appeared rather alarmed about some lucky day, the time for the occurrence of which I forget.

In the Rajah's camp a great display was made. He mounted his elephant carriage, and went out to review his troops, and there was a vast firing of small arms, cannon, and rockets, with abundance

* Vizier Allee, the well known supposititious son of Nawab Asoph-u-dowlut, and who for some time occupied the musnud of Oude, after the rebellion, in which he was defeated, fled to Pertaub Sing, Rajah of Jeypore. And the Rajah, after promising him protection, had him treacherously seized, in the palace of Jeypore, and delivered up to Colonel Collins, British resident at Sindea's court, in December 1799. This transaction was viewed by all the Rajepoots as a foul stain on his name and nation.

of salutes; and after his return to camp, great sacrifices were performed, and he distributed some lakhs of rupees in presents to the Brahmins and alms to the poor. Next morning he commenced his march towards us, and approached to within twenty côs.

When Luckwa heard of the Rajah's approach he moved the whole army forwards to the bank of a deep but narrow river, near Mallpoorah, and took up a good position, with the river in our front; our army covering an extent of several miles. Next day we were all drawn up, and Luckwa inspected the whole of the troops, and addressed to them the following short speech:—"To regain the old Pateil's turban,* I am resolved to conquer or to die,—hear this, O, ye sons of the brave!" And to this they all replied, with three loud shouts, "May God assist us!"

On the following day a council of war was held; at which all officers in command of brigades, and all chieftains of note, were called to assist. They assembled in Luckwa's tent; and it was there decided on that the army should change

* In a battle with the Rajepoots, on a former occasion, Madhajee Sindea, being beaten, was forced to fly, and in his flight lost his *turban*.

ground, and take up a stronger position. This was accordingly done next morning, and our position was as follows:—keeping the river about a mile in our front, we had on our right the range of hills that rise above Mallpoorah; and on our left a strong mud fort: in our rear were several small hills, and also some deserted villages.

The cavalry of both armies now began to see each other, for the Rajah's camp was only ten côs distant. Cattle were carried off and brought in by both parties; and there was plundering on all sides. After many days of this sort of suspense, the Rajah again made a move, and encamped at five côs distance in our front; and now skirmishing and distant cannonading took place every day, and Luckwa formed his plan of battle. The attack was to be made in two lines; the first consisting of infantry, the second, a thousand paces in their rear, of cavalry. Each flank was to be supported by 5,000 horse, and chieftains of great trust were appointed to this duty.

The Rajah's troops now moved, and took up their position in rear of the river, which, by this means, was all we had between us. Next day *we* advanced, and came within cannon reach. A

smart fire was kept up almost all day by the great guns, and both lines slept for two nights under arms. Luckwa then resolved to strike the first blow, and gave the different commanders of our army their signals of attack. The post these signals were to be given from was a hill in our rear. The *first* port-fire shown from thence was to be the signal for advancing, with our guns limbered; the *second*, was to unlimber; and the *third*, to commence firing.

At four o'clock in the morning we saw the first light, when the army moved off in high order. In half an hour after, the second was seen, and we unlimbered, the lights of the enemy's fires along their line being in view. They had lighted these fires to keep themselves warm, in the belief that we dared not attack; and were completely surprised. Unfortunately, before we saw the third light, our right had reached the enemy's left; and our cavalry, finding them not on the alert, cut in and gave the alarm. In an instant the whole of their line was seen in a blaze, each golundaze, as he awoke, firing off his gun.

By this time we had reached the river, and every commander got his own corps over as best he could. Our brigade crossed, and formed in a

column on the opposite bank. Not a single gun was fired from our line until our colonel gave us orders. The enemy's guns were, by this time, only about five hundred yards distant, and the day had dawned, when we received orders to commence firing. Our guns then opened; but after a few rounds the order to advance was given, and on we went. The guns that were before us, about forty in number, we took immediately, with the loss of about one thousand men, killed and wounded; my horse was killed under me.

We now saw Chevalier Dudernaig's brigade, which was on our left, charged by the Rhattores. He received them nobly, but was cut to pieces by them. Out of 8,000 men he had not 200 left. The writer of this has heard Colonel Skinner describe this event, not in the curt manner in which it is given in his journal, but with all the characteristic energy and spirit which he never failed to infuse into his word-of-mouth descriptions. The Rhattores, more than ten thousand in number, were seen approaching from a distance; the tramp of their immense and compact body rising like thunder above the roar of the battle. They came on first at a slow hand-

gallop, which increased in speed as they approached: the well-served guns of the brigade showered grape upon their dense mass, cutting down hundreds at each discharge; but this had no effect in arresting their progress;—on they came, like a whirlwind, trampling over fifteen hundred of their own body, destroyed by the cannon of the brigade; neither the murderous volleys from the muskets, nor the serried hedge of bayonets, could check or shake them: they poured, like a torrent, on and over the brigade, and rode it fairly down, leaving scarce a vestige of it remaining,—as if the sheer weight of their mass had ground it to pieces. Then, as if they had but met with a slight obstacle, they looked not even behind them at the fallen; but went on, unshaken, and still in their formidable mass, to attack the cavalry of the second line. "These," as Skinner says, "ran like sheep," while the Rhattores pursued them, cutting them down, for several côs. He shall tell the rest of the story himself:—

In this charge Captain Paish, and several other officers, were killed; and Dudernaig only escaped by throwing himself amongst the dead. Several other corps of our side, however, suc-

ceeded in capturing the enemy's guns. But we now saw the Rajah, on his *ambarree** elephant, moving towards our brigade, with 5,000 or 6,000 choice horse. Colonel Pholman, in order to oppose the threatened attack, gave the word for each battalion to form close columns of companies, in rear of the right company; which was done in great style. He next ordered columns of battalions to close upon the centre battalion; and this manœuvre was equally well performed; with our artillery supporting the front of the columns.

The Rajah now approached us within two or three hundred yards, when we gave them a salvo, which brought his elephant down. The horse twice attempted to charge us, but were beaten off with great slaughter. On this, the Rajah mounted his horse, and retired, and was seen no more. The horse went off along with him.

We now could see something of the effect of our attacks. In the various points, some were gaining and some losing, and hundreds of loose horses were running all over the field of battle; but it was soon seen that victory was inclining towards our side. The enemy's infantry was

* Bearing the royal pavilion.

everywhere defeated, but their cavalry seemed still disposed to make furious attacks on all sides; and we were ordered to throw ourselves into squares of brigades, to resist them. For my part, having lost my horse early, I remounted myself, by catching one of the loose ones of the enemy.

About nine o'clock the field began to clear. Our brigade had taken forty guns and thirty stand of colours from their infantry. The Rajah's cavalry, not knowing what had become of him,* had retired to their camp to look for him. The field was ours; but the Rhattores had not yet returned from their chase. They had *licked* the

* The Rajah, having fled from the field, never halted till he reached Jeypore, whither, however, the news of his defeat and rout had preceded him. It is said that when he reached his own zenanah, his mother, a woman of far more courage than he, and better fitted for a sovereign in troublous times, was sitting prepared to receive him, while a female attendant was preparing food for her in an adjoining apartment. It is the custom with the Rajepoots, that, of whatever substance the *dishes* they eat from be made, the food, while being prepared, is stirred with a spoon made of *iron*. As the Rajah entered, the noise of this spoon against the sides of the dish was heard, on which the lady called out, "Ai!" (such a one) "be quiet! Here is the Rajah, and you know he cannot bear the sound of *steel!*"

whole Mahratta cavalry, and driven them several côs; and in a few hours we saw their dust, and found they were returning in a gole, nokarahs* beating victory. When they came closer, and saw their colours flying in our lines, they took us for the Jeypoor infantry; but they soon found out their mistake, by receiving a discharge of grape from thirty pieces of cannon, which brought many of them to the ground. Twice they charged us; and, though each time repulsed, several broke into our squares, and were bayoneted there. A Rhattore sowar attacked me in the square, and shot my horse, and I only escaped him myself by getting under a tumbril. The acts of these Rhattores, and the cool intrepidity they showed in the square, surpasses all that I can say in their praise. At last they extricated themselves, and the survivors retired towards their camp.

About noon, running camels brought intelligence that the Rajah, and all the troops that had escaped from the battle, had retreated towards Jeypore. The three hundred cavalry attached to our brigade were ordered to go on, and collect information. With them I volunteered, and was permitted to go. On reaching the enemy's camp,

* Kettle-drums.

I found the news correct,—it was utterly abandoned; and accordingly I instantly sent word of this back to Colonel Pholman. I marched into the encampment; it was the largest and best I had ever seen, but totally deserted. Here were most beautiful tents, and large bazaars, filled with everything imaginable, but not a man to be seen. My three hundred sowars dispersed, and went to plunder; and I myself, with two of them, went on, and reached the Rajah's wooden bungalow, the most beautiful thing I ever saw—all covered with embroidery and crimson velvet. I entered, and saw nothing but gold and silver. In opening one of the Rajah's *poojah* baskets,* I found two golden idols, with diamond eyes, which I immediately secured in my bosom, for fear they should be discovered. I found also several other trinkets, which I likewise took. But about this time our Mahratta cavalry had also returned, and in an hour or two the whole encampment was full of them. In coming away I found a brass fish, with two chowrees hanging to it, like moustachios. It attracted my curiosity, and I tied it to my saddle. On my way back I

* That is, containing the images and sacred articles for his private worship.

met numbers of Mahratta chieftains going and coming, who all looked at me, and laughed as I passed, for what reason I could not then imagine.

I found our brigade had been ordered to move, and lay down our arms near the camp; when half the men were permitted to go and plunder. But meeting a trooper who had been sent by Colonel Pholman to call me, I instantly followed him to that officer's presence. I found him sitting with Luckwa Dada along with several other chiefs, under a large tree; and on my approach to Luckwa, he came up, and ordered me to dismount. I feared that he might have heard something about my prize, which, however, I had secured in my *charjameh*;* and thinking that he wanted to examine my saddle, I began to excuse myself by saying that I was much fatigued, and would be glad to have some rest. But Luckwa told me that he wished to see me, for I had saved the "Old Pateil's" turban in this day's battle. I thought that by this he meant to say that my battalion had especially distinguished itself in the charges of the Rhattores: but he came closer to me, and Pholman, seeing me confused, perplexed

* A sort of padded saddle, used by the Mahrattas and other natives.

me still more by his laughing. At last Luckwa asked me what it was I had hanging to my horse. I replied, "A brass fish." "Will you give it me?" said he. "By all means," said I, "provided you will demand nothing more of me." "No," said he, "I will not." "Give me your word on that," replied I, and he immediately did so; on which I loosed the fish, and presented it to him.

"Well," said he, "dismount now, and let me embrace you;" and as my orderlies and groom had now come up, I dismounted, and he embraced me. He then explained to me that the fish I had given him was the actual *mahee muratib*,* or imperial ensign of honour bestowed by the King of Dehlee upon the Rajah.

I then showed to Luckwa the few trinkets I had brought from the Rajah's bungalow, amounting in value to about 2,000 rupees, and offered them to him as a nuzzur; but I took good care to say nothing about the idols. At first he would

* The *mahee muratib*, literally "the fish of dignities," was a standard conferred by the Moghul emperors only on the chiefs of highest rank; and consisted of the image of a fish, as described in the text, with a golden ball: it was equivalent to the three horse-tails of the Turkish empire.

receive nothing; but, on my pressing him, he did accept of a diamond ring, of the value of about 200 rupees. Luckwa then presented me with a fine embroidered palankeen, an aurenee (a sort of chittah or parasol), besides a grand khilut, and an allowance of forty rupees per month to maintain the bearers.

I expressed my gratitude to him for all his kindness, but observed that, being under Colonel Pholman's command, I could not accept of it without his permission. On which that gentleman immediately gave his consent, and I was dismissed from the Durbar.

Our loss in this battle was about 20,000 men killed and wounded; that of the Rajah must have been greatly more, probably double of ours, for the Mahratta cavalry followed them, killing, plundering, and burning, to the gates of Jeypore. Many chieftains of note were slain on both sides, and amongst those of ours, much to my sorrow, was my worthy friend and protector, Hurjee Sindea, who fell in the charge of the Rhattores. About 150 pieces of cannon were captured by different parties of our troops, and about 100 by the infantry commanded by Europeans.

Next day I carried the palankeen and pre-

sented it to Colonel Pholman, who graciously accepted it. My day's plunder and khilut might amount to the value of 15,000 rupees. All our soldiery were enriched by the plunder they obtained. Luckwa ordered all the dead of the enemy to be burned or buried, and gave five rupees to each of the wounded soldiers, whom he also sent to Jeypore. He gave grand khiluts to all the wounded chieftains.

After a stay of fifteen days here, general orders were received from Perron, which were read at the head of our brigade. They bestowed high commendations on the corps, and I found myself promoted to be Captain-lieutenant, with 300 rupees per month; the allowance for my bearers was confirmed; and, more than all, I received a most flattering private letter from Perron himself, with assurances that he would not forget me.

The army now moved to Chaksoo, within twelve côs of Jeypore, where Luckwa Dada reviewed the troops, and thanked them for their good conduct on the day of the battle. Khiluts were given to all the officers, according to their ranks. In May, Colonel Perron himself joined us with five battalions and his body guard, which consisted of 500 horse, called the khassee risalah

(or household horse). And the Rajah of Jeypore was forced to pay up his tribute, amounting to twenty-five lakhs of rupees.

On the 1st of June, the army dispersed to their different quarters. Perron, and the troops he brought with him, remained with our brigade. Invitations were now sent by the Jeypore Rajah to all the European officers, and we accompanied Perron to Jeypore. The Rajah met him about a côs from the city,—between it and the Motee Durgah. The Rajah's sowarree* was very grand and superb. He had twenty elephants, with richly embroidered ambarrehs,† the whole of them mounted by his Sirdars,—he himself riding upon the largest, just in the centre. A hundred golden ensigns, two hundred long-pointed spears, and about a hundred large rockets, with golden flags at the end of their bamboos, were carried running before him in three separate lines. The rear was brought up by 500 chosen Rajepoot horse, and some infantry.

Perron's sowarree consisted of five elephants, his khassee risalah, and all his European officers—about sixteen in number. The meeting took

* Cavalcade, procession.

† Canopied howdahs, generally used by princes.

place with fear and mistrust on both sides. Perron, after shaking hands with the Rajah, was permitted to bring his elephant on that prince's right. The sowarrees mingled together, and all moved towards the town. Two battalions were drawn up near the gate. A salute of twenty-one guns was fired on the Rajah's approach, and, whilst he passed, the troops presented arms. We entered the town, which appeared to my eyes the handsomest I had ever seen: the streets were broad, the houses regular on both sides the streets; the bazaars, with their rich red broadcloth purdahs as a canopy, looked extremely handsome; the town full of inhabitants, who seemed rich and happy. We dismounted at the Hawah Muhul (or palace of the winds*), which was most splendidly furnished and decorated. A rich guddee,† with embroidery and pearls, was placed on a marble throne, on which the Rajah took his seat. Three hundred chieftains, all dressed in yellow jamahs (robes) and large tur-

* There are several royal palaces at Jeypore, of which the *Hawah Muhul* and the *Sath Muhuleh* (a seven-storied structure, of great size), with fine gardens, are the chief.

† The large flat cushion on which the prince sits. It is equivalent to the word musnud, and signifies "the throne."

bans, seated themselves on his right, while we took our places on his left; the people of the Rajah's household took up their stations in the Rajah's rear. The sight was very grand,—the Rajepoot chieftains all leaned on their shields, and had their tulwars (or swords) resting on their right thigh. The Rajah was covered with jewels, as were a great many of his favourite chieftains. It was one of the richest durbars I ever beheld.

The prime minister then rose with Perron, and introduced us one after another, according to our respective ranks. He accepted of our nuzzurs;* and, after a little conversation, he begged of Perron to permit us to retire into his khilut-khanat, to be robed. This being of course granted, we followed the prime minister into a large hall, where we were all handsomely robed; and having returned to the Durbar, the Rajah rose to receive us. When we had made our salaam, he sat down, and we advanced one by one, according to rank, and presented our second nuzzur, which he also accepted. The Durbar was then dis-

* The gift presented by an inferior to a superior, the acceptance of which implies favour and protection on his part, as the presenting it does subservient obedience on that of the inferior.

missed, with the exception of a few favourite chiefs. A grand entertainment, in the true Hindoo style, was prepared for us, to which the Rajah accompanied us.* We had several sorts of liquors, besides strong Hindostanee spirits; and we spent the day very happily. After dinner, several sets of handsome Nautch girls were introduced, who sang and danced well; and, about three P.M., we were called by the Rajah to see some fights between elephants, as well as with tigers and buffaloes. This amused us highly until near sunset, when we received our dismissal, and went back to camp.

We remained at Chaksoo till the end of June, when the Jhoudpore Rajah requested Perron to punish some of his refractory thakoors (chieftains). We accordingly marched to Mairtha, a large town belonging to the Rajah; and in this vicinity we remained until July, reducing several chieftains who would not pay their tribute to the Jhoudpore man.

* To honour them with his presence, not to partake of the feast; as no Hindoo, particularly of so high a rank, would eat with Europeans.

CHAPTER VI.

Murder of Mahratta chiefs by Sindea—War on all sides —Inroad of Simboonauth repelled by Ashreff Beg— Robert Skinner joins his brother—Appointed to his own corps—Siege of Dehlee by Perron—Expedition against the Sikhs—Hessing's brigade destroyed by Holcar—Siege of Agra—Attack of Ram Paul Sing's fort—Robert Skinner wounded—Battalion sent to assist the Karoulee Rajahs—Attack on the Oonearah Rajah—Battalion defeated and cut up—Skinner himself wounded—Dreadful night on the field—Relieved by a Chumar woman—Resolute self-denial of a Rajepoot Soobahdar—Oonearah Rajah's generous conduct—Troops assemble to attack Luckwa Dada—Battle of Soundah—Luckwa's defeat— And death.

NOTHING of consequence occurred until the 15th of August, when news arrived that Sindea, by the advice of Shirzee Rao Ghatkay, his father-in-law, had seized and put to death the following chieftains, who had joined the Bhyes in their insurrection against his authority. Narrain Rao

Buxshee, son of Jeea Dada, was blown up by rockets, a new mode of torture invented by Ghatkay; Manajee, Dhallojee, and two others, were blown from the mouths of cannon; and Balloba Pajanevese, Elleet Tantia, and Sewdashea Bhow, had their heads crushed with tent mallets. Jesswunt Rao Huldea, and Bharoo Buchilot, were poisoned. These were all chiefs of Dowlut Rao Sindea's uncle, the "old Pateil," men high in rank and of great ability. Of lower ranks many more were killed, and others got off by paying every pice they had for their lives. This was the most fatal blow Sindea ever gave his army. The remaining chiefs of note all dispersed, and flew for shelter wherever they could find it. Luckwa Dada and Juggo Bappoo fled from Muttra, and Perron was made commander-in-chief of all Hindostan. The only friends Sindea now had, were his European officers; his best protectors, the regular brigades in his service.

War broke out on all sides. The various Mahratta soobahs* in Sindea's territory revolted, and refused obedience. Jesswunt Rao Holcar, natural son of Mulhar Rao Holcar, now escaped

* Governments, provinces; thus the Soobah of Bengal, of Bahar, &c.

from prison, began to collect troops, and was joined by many of Sindea's chieftains. There was nothing on every side but confusion and discord, and Perron received orders to raise as many brigades as he could.

On the 15th September, letters arrived from Colonel Pedron, at Coel, to tell that Simboonauth, soobahdar of Seharunpore, had collected about 5,000 Sikh horsemen, 10,000 infantry, and twenty pieces of cannon, intending to invade our jaidad* for the brigades; and that he had sent Ashreff Beg, an old officer, and held in much respect by the soldiers, in command of three battalions, 1,000 horse, with ten pieces of cannon, and some Rohilla infantry, to oppose the invasion.

General Perron, on hearing this, immediately detached Captain F. L. Smith, with two battalions, to join Ashreff Beg, by forced marches; and he left us on this duty on the 20th, whilst we, with the rest of the troops, marched for Dehlee on the 1st of October, by Futtipore Jhoonjhuo, in the Shekawut country.

Ashreff Beg and his force reached Khandowlee unmolested, when information came that Simboo-

* Jaidâd means territory assigned for the support of troops.

nauth had marched, with the whole of his troops, to attack him. The Beg immediately took up a strong position near Khandowlee, and next morning the Sikhs made their appearance. They tried in vain to decoy the old soldier from his post; but, on the following morning, the whole of the enemy's army having arrived, Simboonauth summoned him to surrender. To this old Ashreff scornfully replied, that buneas (or shopkeepers, of which caste Simboonauth was) had best mind their own business, and not think of threatening soldiers, whose lives were sold as sheep were to the butcher; and that, for his own part, he had come there to die, or to teach *him* to sell grain.

Simboonauth, enraged at this reply, made an immediate and sharp attack, which Ashreff Beg gallantly repulsed, capturing four or five of the enemy's cannon; but this was not effected without severe loss, for out of his three battalions, which did not number more than 2,000 muskets, he lost 500 men. In the evening he retired into the town; and, on the following morning, the enemy, taking courage from his retreat, came and encamped within two côs of it.

Ashreff Beg now resolved to try the effect of a surprise; so, taking 1,000 infantry and all his

horse, he moved out, about three in the morning, and reached their camp a little before dawn. He succeeded completely in surprising them, and took several pieces of cannon, which, however, he could not bring away. The day had broken, however, before he commenced his retreat, and the enemy, recovering from their fright, attacked him on all sides. Ashreff Beg then ordered the horse to set off for the town, which they reached with the loss of 100 men; while he threw his infantry into a square, and made good his retreat, with all his cannon, though the Sikhs pressed him hard, and fought nobly. His loss in this gallant affair was about 300 men, but several brave and good native officers were killed, which disheartened him so much that he remained inactive for five days. News then came that Smith had arrived at Boughput, which, had he exerted himself, he ought to have reached sooner, and that Perron, with his whole army, was not far off.

These news alarmed Simboonauth, who commenced his retreat to Seharunpore; but Ashreff Beg would not let him off without another attack, and he succeeded in bringing away some guns; after which he was joined by Mahomed Auzim Khan, an officer commanding a battalion in Sim-

boonauth's service, who brought his corps along with him. Captain Smith, having joined Ashreff Beg's force, took the command, and in a few days marched towards Seharunpore, which place Simboonauth had already reached. On Smith's approach, he set off with the Sikhs to the Punjab, but the remaining infantry and guns surrendered to Smith.

On the 1st of November, Perron and his army reached Seekur, and Skinner's brother, Robert, joined him from Berhampore. Perron immediately gave the young man an ensign's commission, and appointed him to his brother's corps. His introduction of their young officer to the men he was now to command was highly characteristic. Calling his most trusty native officers together—fine old fellows, with scarred faces and grizzled beards—steady intrepid soldiers—he drew himself up in military fashion, and pointing to young Skinner, said—"Yeh humara bhaee hye—ooskeeteen sumbhalo!"—"This is my brother! see that ye be his protectors!" And the veterans, stroking their beards, and carrying their hands to their foreheads, replied, with strong emphasis, "On our heads be it."*

* The writer is not quite certain whether the occasion on

Nothing of consequence occurred during our march through the Rajepoot country eastward; but when we reached Rewarree, information was received that the killadars of Dehlee and Agra had declared against Sindea. Perron summoned the killadar of Dehlee, who was a Mahratta, but he treated the summons with contempt; on which Perron marched to Dehlee, in the vicinity of which he arrived on the 25th, and encamped at Talkatorah. On the following morning he occupied the ground between Hoomayoon's tomb and Dehlee, and again summoned the killadar to give up the fort.

This being refused, six battalions, with their guns, were next day sent to attack the town, and we marched in at the Dehlee gate without molestation. Perron then, by beat of drum, proclaimed

which Skinner recommended his brother to his men, in this striking address, was not rather on the young man being first sent out in command of a detachment. He was not altogether confident of his brother's perfect discretion, and took this method of securing, from their tried fidelity and attachment to himself, their faithful co-operation and circumspection for this young soldier. It admirably shows the mutual confidence of Skinner and his men, and his affectionate anxiety, not free from doubt, of Robert Skinner's temper and discretion.

his own authority, and appointed his own officers over the different departments. On the 29th our guns were opened against the fort, and the fire from them and from small arms lasted all day. Our trenches, too, were opened both at the Dehlee and Toorkoman gates. On the 2nd December the killadar came to terms, and was, at the Shah's request, permitted to go off with his private property. Captain Drugeon, a French officer, was then appointed killadar, and Shajee, a native, the soobahdar.

On the 15th, we marched for Kurnaul, to bring the Sikhs into order, who were assembling in a large body to overrun the Doab; and on the 1st of January 1799 we arrived there. Perron then summoned all the Sikh chieftains between the Jumna and the Sutlege, of which the chief were Sahib Sing of Pattialah, Bunjah Sing of Tanessur, Goordial Sing of Ladooah, Bhycoll Sing of Kythul, Bhaug Sing of Jheend, and many other petty ones. At first they all made a show of resistance, and for this purpose they assembled at Pattialah, and Perron began to recruit for cavalry at Kurnaul. Goolshair Khan, the nawab of Kunjepoorah, then joined us, and several other Mussulman chiefs of note raised their standards

in aid of Perron against the Sikhs, so that about the 20th of February we had mustered 10,000 horse, and marched to Tanessur. Bunjah Sing retired on our approach, and joined the main body at Pattialah; but, on the 10th of March, a treaty was entered into, and ratified, with all the Sikhs, which terminated the business amicably.

By the 1st of April, till which time the army remained at Tanessur, all the Sikh chieftains had paid their visits to Perron; and on the 2nd we marched towards Dehlee. About the 10th we reached Paneeput, where the Begum Sumeroo * joined us, with four battalions; and on our way to Dehlee we chastised some large villages for refusing to pay their rents to Perron's collectors. Among these was Naweltha, which lies about seven cŏs west of Paneeput. In the end of April we encamped at Deetaram-ka-Serai, from whence the Begum was ordered to return home to Seidhannah.

Colonel Pedron had by this time completed the third brigade, and a number of officers were taken into the service and posted to it. Captain Smith was also moved from our brigade. Perron retired with the cavalry to his head-quarters at Coel; and

* An account of this lady will hereafter appear.

the fortress of Alleeghur was ordered to be put in complete repair, and garrisoned with 2,000 Bhadawar Rajepoots. Our brigade (the second) was sent, under the command of Colonel Pholman, to Muttra, where we arrived on the 1st of the month.

At this time Sindea, who lived in fear of the Mahrattas, left Poonah, on his way to Hindostan. When he reached Asseerghur he detached Colonel Hessing's brigade in advance, meaning soon to follow; but by the end of July, when Hessing had reached Oojeine, the Nerbudda rose, and Sindea was obliged to remain during the rains at Asseerghur. In the mean time, Jesswunt Rao Holcar, who had raised a large army, both infantry and horse, surrounded Hessing and his brigade, and cut it to pieces. He fought gallantly for ten or fifteen days, but no succour arriving, he and all his troops fell victims to Holcar's rage and cruelty.* In this sad affair

* See Grant Duff's Mahratta history. Before attacking Hessing, Holcar had cut off a smaller detachment, under Captain MacIntyre, which laid down their arms to him at a place called Neuree. He afterwards attacked Sindea's grand park of artillery, escorted by Captain Brownrigg, with four battalions; but that officer, hearing of Holcar's approach, took up a strong position, and beat him off with great loss.

sixteen country-born officers, who were all my school-fellows, were killed at their guns. They all had entered the service within a month of each other. Among them were Captain-lieutenant MacPherson, son of Captain MacPherson of the Company's service; Lieutenant Graham, whose father was an ensign in the same; Lieutenants Montague, Davis, and Arcote. Hessing was the only European that escaped. Major Dareebdoon, a half Frenchman, was wounded and made prisoner; and old John Hessing paid 30,000 to 40,000 rupees to get him out of Holcar's hands.

On the 1st of August, Perron came to Muttra to punish Ackajee,* the Mahratta killadar, at Agra; and, on the 20th, we laid siege to the fort of that city. Ackajee defended it well for two months, and we lost a great number of men; but at length we were obliged to blow up a bastion on the river-side near the town, and when this had been levelled, and Ackajee informed that not a man should be spared if he did not give up the fort, he *kabooled* (acquiesced) and surrendered it, stipulating for being allowed to retire to Gwalior

* There seems a mistake in this name, probably it was *Ab*ajee.

with his private property. Our loss in this siege was about 1,000 men in killed and wounded.

Perron returned to Alleeghur about the 10th of November, and I was sent with three battalions, a battering train, and 500 horse, to attack a fort near the Chumbul river, belonging to a Rajepoot thakoor, called Ram Paul Sing. The rest of the brigade marched back to Muttra, and Colonel Sutherland, forgiven by the interest of his father-in-law, Colonel John Hessing, was sent to command the first brigade with Sindea.

I arrived with my detachment before the fort of Ram Paul Sing on the 15th November, reconnoitred it forthwith, and next day prepared to attack it. It was a little mud fort, so level with the crest of the glacis that there was no touching the bastions with our guns. On the 20th, I opened our trenches, and advanced by regular approaches to the glacis. From thence I ordered a mine to be carried on under it, because the guns could not bear upon the rounee (counterscarp). By the 5th of December the mines were loaded; and, on the morning of the 6th, the whole of the three battalions were ordered into the trenches, ready to storm, in three columns. At ten A. M., after a smart cannonading of four hours, the mines

were sprung, and so well did they work that the whole of the glacis was thrown into the ditch. Immediately after, the troops moved out with scaling-ladders, and placed them, but Ram Paul, with his 300 Rajepoots, defended the walls so well that the storming party was beaten back.

I gave the men an hour's rest, and then, at noon, the parties moved again, and carried the place with great difficulty, the whole of the brave garrison being put to the sword. Only Ram Paul and a few more were taken prisoners alive, but all were severely wounded. Our loss was 200 men killed, and about 100 more wounded. My brother, who was with me, was wounded through the neck by a matchlock ball. I sent him with the wounded to Agra, but Ram Paul and his comrades were sent to Alleeghur.*

Having reported the whole affair to Major Pholman, two of the battalions, with the horse and battering guns, were ordered to join the brigade at Muttra; while I, with my battalion, was directed to join the Karowlee Rajah, to the south of Agra, which I did in the end of Decem-

* This serves as another illustration of Rajepoot resolution and sense of honour, which will yield to no odds, and prefers dying sword in hand.

ber. It appeared that the Karowlee Rajah had fallen out with the Ooneara Rajah, whose territory lies near Tonk-Rampoorah, and had hired several battalions belonging to native chieftains, and my battalion from Perron, to fight his battles. Our force amounted to six battalions, and about 2,000 horse, but very bad; and fifteen pieces of cannon, besides the five 6-pounders belonging to my battalion.

On the 1st January 1800, the Rajah reached the Bunas river, near Tonke. I sent my spies to the Ooneara Rajah's camp, pitched about two côs from his capital, and discovered that he had about 3,000 Rajepoot horse and 3,000 infantry, belonging to his relative, the Jeypore Rajah, with about twenty pieces of cannon. He moved to a spot five côs distant from us, and there encamped, keeping the Bunas river between us.

The business, however, began to wear a bad aspect; for not only was the Karowlee man a coward, but he had not cash to pay us regularly, and the battalions he had hired grew dissatisfied, and teased him every day for money. I now began to be uneasy about the fate of my own corps, and reported to Colonel Pholman that no dependence was to be placed on the troops which

the Rajah had hired, so that he would require to reinforce me immediately, as otherwise the battalion must be cut to pieces.

The Ooneara Rajah soon became aware of the badness of our troops, and, crossing the river on the 25th of January, took up a good position about six miles in our front, from whence he began to correspond with the native commandants of the battalions with us. I informed our chieftain of this, but I could not convince him of the treachery of the native commanders. On the 31st, the Ooneara Rajah moved in battle array to attack us, and we drew out to meet him in one line, with cavalry on the flanks. About nine A.M. the armies came in sight of each other, and at eleven the cannonading commenced. After a few rounds, the whole of the infantry on our side silenced their guns. The Ooneara cavalry charged the Karowlee cavalry on the left, and immediately our infantry went over and joined the enemy.

As soon as I perceived this, I commenced retreating to a deserted village in our rear, which I gained with difficulty. Two of the enemy's battalions came up to attack me, but I charged and drove them back. I now saw the whole of

his cavalry and infantry moving towards us; and, as I had no hopes of succour, I resolved to retreat, if possible, to Tonke, which was about four côs distant, and belonged to Sindea.

I called together all my native officers, and asked them what they thought of my plan, which was to defend the village till night should come on, and then retreat to Tonke. They said that it would be impossible to stand out in the village against the force and cannon that were coming against us; and that it would be better to commence the retreat immediately, and try to gain the ravines, which were about two côs distant, before the main body should come up, and cut the Karowlee man's cavalry to pieces. I agreed to this proposition accordingly, and moved out, resolved to die or make good my retreat.

The two battalions of the enemy that were near me had been joined by the Rajah himself, with about 1,000 horse, who charged me several times as I commenced to retreat. I repulsed them, but with the loss of one gun, which broke down, and of my own horse mortally wounded, though it still kept on; but the remainder of their battalions now coming fast up, I found further progress impossible, and drew up in a fine plain to

receive them. Here I made a short speech to the men: I told them we were trying to avoid a thing which none could escape—that was *death;* that come it would, and, as such was the case, it became us to meet it, and die like soldiers.

Thus resolved, we allowed the enemy to come within fifty yards, when we gave them a volley, and charged. Those in our front gave way, and we captured their guns. As those on the flanks, however, now galled us with their cannon, I threw myself into a square, and sought to gain the ravines, now only about half a côs from us. But fate had decided against us. They pressed us so close on all sides, that my men began to lose their coolness; we were charged too, and lost three more of our guns. Still, with the one left I kept moving on, and got clear of the enemy's infantry, who had got a little sickened, and showed less disposition to chase; but the cavalry kept on charging, and my men giving up very fast.

I still had some 300 good soldiers and my gun left, but a party of horse pressed us so hard, that I moved out with 100 men and stopped them; but when I looked back, I found only ten had followed me—the rest had turned back and joined

the gun. As I was going to follow them, a horseman galloped up, matchlock in hand, and shot me through the groin. I fell, and became insensible immediately; and, after my fall, the poor remains of my brave but unfortunate fellows met the same fate. I do not believe that fifty men out of the 1,000 escaped from the field untouched.

It was about three in the afternoon when I fell, and I did not regain my senses till sunrise next morning. When I came to myself, I soon remembered what had happened, for several other wounded soldiers were lying near me. My pantaloons were the only rag that had been left me, and I crawled under a bush to shelter myself from the sun. Two more of my battalion crept near me;—the one a soobahdar, that had his leg shot off below the knee; the other, a jemadar had a spear wound through his body. We were now dying of thirst, but not a soul was to be seen; and in this state we remained the whole day, praying for death. But alas! night came on, but neither death nor assistance. The moon was full and clear, and about midnight it was very cold. So dreadful did this night appear to me, that I swore, if I survived, to have nothing more to do

with soldiering,—the wounded on all sides crying out for water—the jackalls tearing the dead, and coming nearer and nearer to see if we were ready for them; we only kept them off by throwing stones, and making noises. Thus passed this long and horrible night.

Next morning we spied a man and an old woman, who came to us with a basket and a pot of water; and to every wounded man she gave a piece of joaree bread, from the basket, and a drink from her water-pot. To us she gave the same, and I thanked Heaven and her. But the soobahdar was a high caste Rajepoot; and, as this woman was a Chumar (or of the lowest caste), he would receive neither water nor bread from her. I tried to persuade him to take it, that he might live; but he said that in our state, with but a few hours more to linger, what was a little more or less suffering to us—why should he give up his faith for such an object? no, he preferred to die unpolluted.

I asked the woman where she lived, and she gave me the name of her village, which was about two côs from Tonke, and a côs and a half from where we lay. About three in the afternoon, a chieftain of the Ooneara Rajah's, with 100 horse-

men, and coolees and beeldars,* arrived on the ground with orders to bury the dead, and to send the wounded into camp. The poor soobahdar now got water, of which he was in the utmost need—indeed, nearly dead for want of it. When we were brought to camp, we found a large two-poled tent pitched, in which all the wounded of my battalion were collected, and, to the best of my recollection, they amounted now to 300 men. No sooner was I brought in, than they all called out, "Ah, here is our dear captain!" and some offered me bread, and some water, or what they had. The chieftain had wrapped me in a large chudder (sheet) when he took me up; and right glad was I to find so many of my brave fellows near me.

My wound was now dressed by the native doctors, and the ball taken out. They soon sent the Rajah word of my arrival, and he sent for me immediately. His tent was close by, and they carried me thither upon my charpaee (low bedstead). The Rajah got up when I entered and made my salaam, and sending for a morah (stool), he sat down by me, asked my name, who I was, and what rank I held. I replied that I was a soldier,

* Porters and pioneers.

and now his prisoner. He then sent me back to my tent, saying that I required rest, and gave me much praise for my conduct in the day of battle.

No sooner had I reached my tent, than a chobedar came, on the Rajah's part, and presented me with 500 rupees, and a tray of cooked meats for dinner. Of the first I gave the chobedar 100 rupees as a present; the other 400, with the victuals, I divided amongst my men. As for myself, the surgeon gave me a good dose of opium, which procured me a fine night's rest. Next morning the Rajah pitched a small tent for me, and wanted to remove me from the men, but I begged he would permit me to stay with them; on which he came himself, and sat talking to me for an hour of different things, and sent me food from his own kitchen, and was kind and generous to all the wounded.

We remained ten days with him in camp, after which he sent us all into his capital of Oonearah, where we were lodged in a large *pucka* house (that is, built of stone and lime). In a few days he followed, and visited us every day, and allowed me to write to Perron, stipulating for my letter being in Persian. We remained with him a

month, when he sent us all to Bhurtpore, presenting me with a grand khilut, including a horse, a shield, and a sword; and giving ten rupees to each of the men, with more in proportion to the native officers. I am glad to say that my friend the soobahdar was also fast recovering.*

We reached Bhurtpore on the 15th of March, and after remaining there five days, we went to Muttra, and joined our brigade there. Perron, who was there, came immediately to see me: he gave us all high commendation for our conduct, and promoted every man that was able to do duty; on the rest he settled pensions. To me he gave the command of his own body-guard, which consisted of two battalions, the 1st and 2nd, called by his own name. Here, too, I met my brother, who had perfectly recovered of his wound, and who had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant, with the command of a battalion in the 2nd brigade under Colonel Pholman, at that time in the Jeypore country. By him I sent a thousand

* The generous conduct of the Oonearah Rajah, one of the least of the Rajepoot princes, cannot fail of striking the reader, especially as contrasted with that of Holcar and some of the native chiefs: it breathes of, and illustrates that generous and chivalrous spirit which of old was the boast and the attribute of the Rajepoot tribes.

rupees to the good and humane Chumar woman who had first assisted us, and who I called my mother.

I had now almost recovered, and went to join the body-guard at Alleeghur. Perron's conduct to me continued most kind and generous; but the two battalions of his body-guard were soon after drafted into the 3rd brigade, under Colonel Pedron, as all his force was now required for another service. In the beginning of August, this brigade was ordered to Gwalior, to join Ambajee, who had received orders to assemble all his troops to attack my poor old master, Luckwa Dada. Luckwa, after the slaughter of so many chieftains, who had taken part with the Bhyes, was convinced that Sindea would work his destruction also; so, in junction with Juggoo Bappoo, and others of that party (the Shenwee Brahmins), he raised troops, and resolved to resist. He had now collected a large army at Duttea, in Bundelcund, and was joined by the Rajah of that place, a man of note in that country.

Ambajee (Inglia) had collected at Gwalior about 20,000 horse, and three brigades of regular infantry; one being commanded by Colonel

Sheppard, one by a native, Colonel Caleb allee, and ours by Colonel Pedron. But not liking to proceed against Luckwa, with whom he had been on friendly terms, he was delaying from day to day to march, in spite of repeated orders to that effect from Sindea: at length, however, being threatened by that prince with sequestration of his whole country, in case of further demurring, he placed the whole army under the command of his brother Bala-rao, and we marched on the 15th of October.

We arrived, at length, at a large town, called Beja Ghur, fifteen côs east of Soundah, a strong fortress on the banks of the Sone river, belonging to the Rajah of Duttea; under the walls of which Luckwa and the Rajah, with their combined forces, were encamped. It was reported that these amounted to 10,000 Bundelah troops, infantry and cavalry, with two regular brigades, one of which was commanded by Colonel Toone,* an Irishman, the other by a native Rajah, Buroor Sing; and 15,000 Mahratta horse. Here we remained encamped for a month; our chief not

* Probably *Tone*, who published an account of the Mahrattas, and was brother of the well-known *Wolfe Tone*

being inclined to move till Perron himself marched from Alleeghur, with five battalions of the fourth brigade, and 5,000 regular Hindostanee horse. He reached us about the 20th of December, by which time we had crossed the river, and encamped about ten côs distant from Luckwa's position.

Skirmishing now took place every day, but nothing of consequence occurred; till, at last, Perron determined upon making an attack. Luckwa's position was a strong one, having Soundah and the river in his rear, ravines extending for five côs in his front, and his flanks supported by ravines and two strong forts. Through these ravines there were but three passages, all well defended by Luckwa's infantry and guns.

Perron formed his infantry into three columns. The right consisted of our brigade, under command of Colonel Pedron; the second, or centre, of Sheppard's brigade, commanded by Colonel Sheppard; and the left, of the five battalions of the fourth brigade and the regular horse, under Captain Syme. We moved on the morning of the 5th of January 1801, and took up our ground in front of the enemy; each column severally

having to attack one of the three passages so well defended by Luckwa. At dawn on the 6th, we were ordered to attack. Colonel Toone's brigade happened to be opposed to our column, and he defended his pass with great bravery: we carried it, however, though with great difficulty, making prisoners of Colonel Toone himself, Captain Evans, and several other officers.

Colonel Sheppard attacked Rajah Burar Sing, and succeeded also, with difficulty; but Captain Syme, who had to deal with the Duttea troops, was beaten back, with great slaughter. Perron, on hearing this, galloped up, and placing himself at the head of the column, led them on with great bravery and coolness, and beat back the Duttea troops in their turn. Our brigade (third) took sixteen guns belonging to Colonel Toone's force; our loss on the occasion being two officers killed, one wounded, and about 1,000 men killed and wounded. Captain Sheppard had three European officers killed and one wounded, and about 1,500 men killed and wounded. The third column lost Captain Syme and Lieutenant Arnold, killed, and Lieutenant Paish wounded. The fifth battalion lost half their men, and had it not been for General Perron's prompt and

gallant assistance, the whole would have been cut up. Perron himself was slightly wounded by a spear.

Poor Luckwa Dada's fate was more severe. Both the Duttea Rajah and Rajah Burar Sing were killed, himself severely wounded, every gun he had taken, in number thirty-five, his whole army destroyed and dispersed, and both his and the Rajah's camp totally plundered. He himself took shelter in the fort, while we returned in triumph to camp with Colonel Toone and his officers.

On the 7th, in the evening, General Perron visited Colonel Toone, and behaved very kindly both to him and to his officers, supplying them with handsome camp equipage, such as tents, camels, and horses. To the Colonel he offered service, but that gentleman declined it; and Perron permitted him and his officers to retire to Mundoosore, the capital of Holcar, furnishing him, as I understood, with 10,000 rupees for their expenses. Luckwa, with a few horsemen, fled to Bettoor, where he soon died of his wounds.* On the 15th of March we arrived again at Alleeghur, and went into cantonments.

* He died in a sanctuary at a place called Saloombra.—Tod's *Rajahstan*, vol. i. p. 456.

CHAPTER VII.

Perron's power—Disliked by the Mahratta officers—His policy—And preference of French officers—Gopaul Rao Bhow's advice to Sindea—Degeneracy of Mahratta chiefs—Holcar—His origin and family—Ahalia Bhye—Tookojee Holcar—Jesswunt Rao Holcar—His alliance with Ameer Khan—His plundering system—Beats Hessing and MacIntyre near Oojeine—Beaten by De Boigne near Indore—Beats the Peishwah at Poona—His cruelty—The "Gurdee ka Wukht."

General Perron had now succeeded in bringing all Hindostan under subjection; and every rajah and soobah, from the Nerbudda to the Sutlej, regarded him as lord and master. He had now under his command four regular brigades, of 8,000 effective men each, and 10,000 regular Hindostanee horse, besides the command of all the troops of every Rajah and chief in that wide territory. He now began to feel his power

and to change his manner. Instead of being, as formerly, a good, plain, honest soldier, beloved by the soldiery and esteemed by all about him, he began to turn his ear to flattery, and to neglect merit, while his favourites got all the good appointments, and he himself thought only of amassing money. All the Mahratta chiefs began to hate him, and to lay plots for his ruin. They even entered into correspondence with the English authorities for this purpose, for they had all taken a great aversion to the regular troops, who they thought had much supplanted them in the favour of their master. Yet even the interests of this generous master began to be neglected by Perron, in spite of all he owed to him. His allowances were indeed enormous. Besides his stated pay of 15,000 rupees a month, as commander-in-chief, his table expenses were allowed him; and for his khassa risaleh, or household troop of 800 horse, he drew pay at the rate of forty rupees each per month. Then from the Jaidad collection he had five per cent.; and on every *mamleh*, or settlement he made with the independent Rajahs, he exacted twenty-five per cent.; so that, upon the lowest calculation, of the natives he drew about 50,000 to 60,000 rupees

per month: and so puffed up was he with his riches and power, that he allowed himself to be persuaded by his flatterers to send an ambassador to Buonaparte. Monsieur Desoutee was the person despatched, but the purport or result of his embassy was never known.

It became, at all events, his policy or his pleasure to give the preference in his choice of officers to his own countrymen over all others, and this to such an extent as not only to disgust the Mahrattas, but to excite the jealousy of the English and country-borns against them. But this was not the only error committed by Perron about this period. Besides his own brigades, Sindea had several others in his employ, of whose commanders Perron became extremely jealous. Of these, the first was commanded by Major Brownrigg, an Irishman, a very brave and able commander, who was much liked by the soldiery, and high in Sindea's favour at Oojeine, in consequence of his successes against Holcar. Another was commanded by Colonel Hessing. Feloze,* Mecule, and Babtiste,† had

* Fidele Filoze was an Italian, well known for his treacherous seizure of Nana Furnavese.

† This is probably Jean or Gian Battiste Filoze, son of the former, called by the natives John Butteejs.

each of them another, besides two or three more commanded by natives. Most of these commanders returned this jealousy, and the Europeans, in this respect, had become as bad as the Mahrattas. To add to the critical situation of Perron, he was hated by Surjee Rao Ghattkey, Sindea's father-in-law, who ruled all his son-in-law's councils, and who sought the General's ruin.

All these jealousies and intrigues had a lamentable effect upon the interests of Sindea. The Mahrattas became quite disunited and changed. No longer held in dread of the Moghuls and Patans in Hindostan, they began to fall like them. Gopaul Rao Bhow, a chief of great name, of sixty years of age—a Mahratta of the old school—and who had been made commander-in-chief with Sindea at Oojeine, made a striking remark as to this degeneracy in open durbar, on the occasion of Sindea's desiring him to build cantonments at Oojeine:—"Our fathers," said he, "the first founders of the Mahratta power, made their houses on the backs of their horses; gradually the house came to be made of cloth; and now you are making it of mud; take care—and mark my words—take care that in a very short time it don't all turn to mud, and is never rebuilt." The

flatterers called him a fool for this, and Sindea laughed at him, and said, "Who is there that dare oppose me, as long as I have my infantry and my guns?" On which Gopaul and Jadoo Rao both replied, — "Beware, it is those very infantry and these guns which will be your ruin."

Sindea, indeed, seemed as mad as the rest, for he now took to kite-flying, nautching, and drinking, with all the other worst native vices; and Perron, feeling himself master of Hindostan, paid little regard to his master's orders. The Peishwah, at Poonah, was quite as bad as Sindea. The Nagpore Rajah did not seem much inclined to move in any way; and of all the Mahratta chiefs, Holcar was the only man of enterprise remaining in the Dekhan; nor did he lose the opportunity afforded him by circumstances of laying a good foundation for future power. But as this chief played so considerable a part in the struggles of this eventful period, it may tend to elucidate the narrative to the general reader if we describe, in a few words, the history of his rise, and the position he held at this time in Central India.

Mulhar Rao Holcar, the founder of the family greatness, was descended from a tribe of shep-

herds, and was born about the year 1693.* He was the rival of the great Madhajee Sindea, with whom he for several years disputed the ascendency in Hindostan. He had but one son, Khundee Rao, who fell in the great battle of Paneeput, and who married that Ahalia Bhye, afterwards so well known in Malwah. This prince had also but one son, who succeeded his grandfather, Mulhar Rao, but who, fortunately, lived a very short time, as he proved not only wicked and cruel, but deficient in intellect. On his death, Ahalia Bhye claimed and maintained the right of succession to the government in her own person; and she proved so wise, so amiable, and benevolent a princess, that all her subjects rejoiced under her rule, and adored her as an avatar of the Deity when she died.†

On her accession, she raised a sillahdar, Tookojee Holcar, of the same tribe, but no relation of the family, to the station of commander-in-

* Sir J. Malcolm's "Central India." For Holcar's origin, see Grant Duff's History, vol. i. p. 479.

† Sir J. Malcolm's "Central India." Her tomb at Maheysur, on the banks of the Nerbuddah, is still a place of Hindoo worship and pilgrimage.

chief to the forces,—a duty she could not herself discharge. She even acknowledged him as son and successor to her dignity;* and that chief very ably executed his trust, and played a conspicuous part in the contests which continually agitated the Dekhan, particularly with the family of Sindea. He left two legitimate and two illegitimate sons. Cassee Rao, the elder of the former, was weak in intellect and deformed in body; Mulhar Rao, the younger, was brave and aspiring. A contest took place between them for the supremacy; and the elder applied to Sindea's minister, Sirjee Rao Ghatkia, for assistance,—a fatal measure, which, after some insidious negotiations, terminated in the treacherous murder of Mulhar Rao, and the plunder and dispersion of both the camps by Sindea's troops.

Jesswunt Rao, the elder of the illegitimate sons, fled from the place, and, after being for some time a fugitive, found refuge at Dhar, a small Rajepoot state, where he was joined by some old adherents of the family. He now became a professed freebooter, directing his enterprizes as much as possible against the country of Sindea, the hereditary enemy of his house, and

* Sir J. Malcolm's "Central India."

in whose hands the imbecile Cassee Rao had remained a passive instrument against its interests. His younger brother, Ettojee, had worse luck in his lawless career; for, having been taken by the Peishwah in arms, that prince had him relentlessly trampled to death by elephants, looking on from a balcony all the time,—an outrage which Jesswunt Rao never forgot or forgave.

About the year 1798 he made overtures to Ameer Khan, another freebooter, who afterwards became but too well known throughout Hindostan, and who at that time was at Bopal with 1,500 followers on foot. The negotiation led to an alliance, which continued till Jesswunt's death. His enterprizes now became more important, and we soon find him plundering many towns and districts on the Nerbudda, belonging to Sindea; and even destroying a strong detachment of the brigade commanded by the Chevalier Dudernaig, at that time in the service of Cassee Rao. These successes, combined with the utter inefficiency of Cassee Rao himself, induced not only Dudernaig and his battalions, but other parties of troops in the same service, to come over and join the more energetic commander; so that before the year

was well out in which he had fled from Poona, Jesswunt found himself at the head of a powerful force, and the recognised guardian of Khundee Rao, son of the murdered Mulhar Rao, in the eyes of all the adherents of the family, in Central India.

In conjunction with Ameer Khan, his predatory enterprizes continued, and Saugor, Bersiah, Seronje, Shujahalpore, and many other towns and districts, belonging both to the Peishwah and to Sindea, were sacked and destroyed with the most relentless barbarity, before the latter could well look about him or collect an army to protect his country. That prince did, however, now exert himself, and advanced his brigades to meet his enemy: but Holcar, who had now collected from 60,000 to 70,000 men, including Ameer Khan's force and that of other Pindarree chiefs, attacked a detachment of eight battalions and twenty guns, under Hessing and MacIntyre, and (as we h ave already learned), notwithstanding the obstinate and gallant resistance of these officers, and the unmanageable description of his own force, he almost utterly annihilated them.

But this success was far more than balanced by his subsequent defeat at Indore, where he lost all

his cannon (ninety-eight pieces), with his camp and stores, and saw his whole army destroyed and dispersed. Had Sindea followed up this blow, Holcar must have been annihilated; but believing his ancient rival quite humbled, he left him quietly at the fortress of Sarem, whither he had fled for refuge; and even entered into negotiations, having for their object the recognition of Holcar as guardian of the family interest, upon certain conditions. But into these, whether sincere or otherwise, Jesswunt Rao would not enter; and time having been given him to recover and recruit, he resumed his life of plunder and aggression, and his camp soon became filled with the rude freebooters and reckless adventurers with which Hindostan and Central India at that time swarmed, afterwards so well known as Pindarrees. He told them plainly that he now had no means of paying them regularly, but he would, at all events, lead them to abundant plunder—and this was all they required.

In 1801 he appears to have been again joined by his infantry brigades, though Dudernaig had quitted his service for that of Sindea; and thus strengthened, he continued to levy his contributions,—sometimes in Rajepootanah and on the

banks of the Chumbul, at others in Malwah and the banks of the Nerbudda,—sometimes checked, and forced to retreat, at others gathering strength, and vigorously pursuing his predatory course, but always marking his track with blood, and cruelty, and desolation.

At length he attacked Candeish, and proceeded towards Poona, with the usual exercise of atrocities and outrage. But the alarm occasioned by his progress aroused Sindea once more, and he detached a force, under Sewdasheo Bhow Bhaskur, to aid the Peishwah. Their combined forces, after some negotiation and a minor affair or two, gave battle to Holcar, on the 25th of October 1802. Holcar had succeeded in mustering fourteen battalions of regular infantry, six being under command of Colonel Vickers, four under that of Major Harding, and four under Major Armstrong. Besides these, he had 5,000 irregular infantry, and 25,000 horse. Sindea had ten battalions, six being commanded by native officers, with no Europeans, and four, though of De Boigne's old troops, had only four Europeans to lead them.

A momentary success at the beginning of the engagement seemed to incline the fortunes of the

day in favour of the combined army: but the energy of Holcar, and the steady gallantry of Vickers, Harding, and Armstrong, which the inferiorly commanded battalions of Sindea could not resist, turned the tide, and secured to Holcar a complete victory;—guns, baggage, and stores all fell into his hands, and the army of his rival was utterly driven from the field. The conqueror behaved on this occasion—no doubt from motives of policy—with unwonted moderation. Poona was left unplundered, entirely by his exertions in controlling his unruly troops; and he affected to desire an amicable arrangement with the Peishwah,—a disposition which certainly was by no means sincere, for, as we have already observed, he never could forgive that prince the savage murder of his brother, Ettojee. The mask was soon thrown aside, and Bajee Rao, the Peishwah, having fled from Poona, and ultimately to Bassein, Holcar took up Amrut Rao, the adopted son of the former Peishwah, and put him in charge of the government of Poona. Enormities of all kinds were committed by these confederates, in order to obtain the funds required for paying their armies and retaining their adherents: and so miserable was the condition of all Malwah and

Rajepootanah at this time, and indeed from the year 1800 to 1818 inclusive, from the excesses of the numerous bands of robbers, called Pindarrees, who ranged over these countries as if they were their common prey, and of the no-less ferocious chiefs and princes who disputed for power upon their soil, that the greater portion of them was utterly ruined and depopulated;* and the natives have given to that period the expressive appellation of the "gurdee-ka-wukht," that is, "the time of troubles."

But at this time the Treaty of Bassein took place; and the interference of the British authorities in favour of the oppressed and more peaceable parties gave a new turn to affairs, the results of which are well known, and which terminated in the gradual re-establishment of quiet and comparative prosperity in this long-vexed portion of India.

* So reduced was the actual number of human beings, and so utterly cowed their spirit, that the few villages that did continue to exist at great intervals, had scarcely any communication with one another; and so great was the increase of beasts of prey, and so great the terror they inspired, that the little communication that remained was often actually cut off by a single tiger known to haunt the road.

But there is another personage,—one of the many European adventurers born of the disjointed and troublous times,—who at this period had risen into considerable importance, and who makes a prominent figure in the immediately-succeeding portion of the Memoir,—this was George Thomas, who, though known by name to most Indians, may not be an acquaintance of the general reader, and who therefore must here receive some notice.

George Thomas* was a native of Tipperary, in Ireland, and came first to India as a quarter-master, or, as some say, a common sailor in a British man-of-war, in 1781-2. But, tired of the sea, and, like many other adventurers, tempted by the prospect held out to soldiers of fortune in India, he left his ship, and took service amongst the Polygars in southern India. Here he remained some years; but probably finding little temptation to continue among such a people, he turned his steps to the north, and actually tra-

* The greater part of the following account of Thomas is taken from Franklin's "Military Memoirs of George Thomas,"—a book which, though not remarkable for its literary value, is certainly authentic, as its contents were derived chiefly from the subject of the memoirs himself.

velled through the centre of India to Dehlee. At that place he received from the Begum Sumroo a commission in her army, and soon obtained great influence over her, by successfully opposing the incursions of the Sikhs, insomuch that he became her principal adviser, and married a slave-girl whom she had adopted.

His influence, however, did not last, for in the course of six or seven years he found himself supplanted by the intrigues of a rival; and about the year 1792 he quitted the service of the Begum, and betook himself to Anoopsheher, then the frontier station of the British army. But it was to the native powers, and not to the British authorities, that he looked for employment; and after a while overtures were made to him by Appa Khunde Rao, a Mahratta chief of distinction, but at that time in disgrace with Sindea, and who was raising troops upon his own account. Thomas joined this chief with 250 tried and chosen horsemen,—an accession of force which, at the time, was very valuable to the Mahratta.

Appa Khunde Rao, who appears to have aimed at independence, directed Thomas to raise a battalion of 1,000 foot and 100 cavalry, for which he assigned him certain pergunnahs in Jaedad,

situated in the county of Mewatt, south-west of Dehlee, but at that time in a state of total insubordination; so that Thomas, as soon as he could raise troops, had to go and reduce his Jaedad to order. He reached Thajara, a principal village in the centre of the country, on a dark and rainy night, after a weary march, and the inhabitants gave him a characteristic welcome, in the shape of a specimen of their skill as thieves; for they stole a horse and some things from the very centre of his camp.

This led to an attack upon the village next day, which proved rather disastrous, as his troops, seized with a panic, ran away, leaving their wounded to be cut in pieces by the enemy. The energetic courage of Mr. Thomas, in recovering a nine-pounder which had stuck in a nullah, and then using it with admirable effect upon the advancing villagers, saved his remaining troops, 300 in number; and with this small party he still offered battle to the enemy, who, however, declined it; nay, such was the effect of the gallantry displayed by Mr. Thomas in this action upon them, that an amicable adjustment was come to, by which they not only restored the stolen articles, but agreed to pay him a year's

rent. The impression thus made rendered the general settlement of the country a far more easy matter; and the burning of one or two refractory villages convinced the rest that opposition to such a power was vain, so that they agreed to pay up all arrears.

But, from the reduction of Mewatt, Thomas was shortly after summoned to the assistance of Appa Khunde Rao himself, whose troops, having mutinied, held him a sort of prisoner in the fort of Kotepootelee. Marching instantly, in spite of the heavy rain, he reached that place, and encamped under its walls, from whence he held communication with his master. The result was, that Appa, with his family and effects, quietly leaving the place, were received by Thomas, who escorted them safely to the fortress of Kanounde. For this service Appa adopted his deliverer as his son, made him handsome presents, authorized him to increase his troops by 200 foot and the same of horse, and added to his Jaedad the four pergunnahs of Jygur, Byree, Mandote, and Phatoda, worth 150,000 rupees a year.

It would be tedious to detail the strange and unaccountable system of intrigue which Appa practised against Thomas, in spite of the un-

wearied course of good service in which the latter persevered, with a constancy almost as unintelligible as the persecution of his capricious master, and which he maintained till the death of that chief. Frequently did he find his liberty or his life treacherously attempted; and yet still did he adhere to the fortunes of his first employer, and even transferred his allegiance to his son and successor, Wamun Rao, a person of less talent, and even less principle, than his father: and thus did Thomas's life become one series of petty contests and escapes from open or secret attempts to destroy him. But his military fame increased, and the name he had acquired enabled him to gather so much head as to give rise to the extraordinary project which he appears about this time (1798) to have first entertained—namely, that of establishing for himself an independent principality in the country.

As a singular proof of the estimation in which Thomas was held, we may mention that the Begum Soomroo, his first mistress, who had often joined in intrigues against him, having been made prisoner in her own palace, knowing his valour and generosity, wrote entreating him to come to her assistance,—nor did she plead in vain. Thomas,

receiving permission from Ambajee Englia, in whose employ he was, and bribing Bappoojee Sindea to march to her assistance, came upon and made the usurper prisoner, and sent him bound to Dehlee, and replaced the Begum in her own place,—and very ungratefully did she requite the obligation.

Pursuing his object of establishing an independent principality, he fixed upon the country or district of Hurriana, which from its peculiar position and nature, as well as the disturbed character of the times, had hitherto fallen a prey to every invader or adventurer of the age, yet could hardly be said to belong to any, and which therefore appeared best suited to his purpose.

In accordance with these views, having recruited his army and replenished his stores, he marched and commenced the enterprize by attacking the town and fort of Kanhoree, whose inhabitants were notorious thieves. His first attack was unsuccessful, being repulsed with the loss of 300 men; and the rains having come on and put an end to active operations, he turned the siege into a blockade, in which he suffered much from sallies of the enemy. On one of these occasions

he had a very narrow escape, being deserted by his men in a redoubt that was the object of the enemy's attack. The weather improving, however, his batteries were erected and worked with such effect that the garrison evacuated the place in the night. This being the stronghold of the country, he soon gained possession of the southern part of it; but it was much longer ere he was enabled to establish his authority so far north as the river Caggur.

Here, then, Mr. Thomas fixed himself, selecting for his capital the town of Hansi, ninety miles west of Dehlee, it being nearly in the centre of his newly-acquired domain. He rebuilt the walls and repaired the fortifications,—encouraged inhabitants to come and fill its depopulated streets, —established a mint, and coined his own money, —collected workmen and artificers of all sorts,— cast his own artillery, made matchlocks and muskets, gunpowder, and all the munitions of war; and made every effort possible for fixing himself permanently in his possessions, and for succeeding in what had for some time become his favourite, though unproclaimed object, namely, attempting the conquest of the Punjab, and, as he himself expresses it, "having the honour of planting

the BRITISH STANDARD on the banks of the ATTOCK."

The comparative smallness and uncertainty of Mr. Thomas's resources, however, forced him to have recourse to measures which he would gladly have avoided, but which were quite in the spirit of the times and country. He subsisted his troops upon the pillage of other countries; and though generally successful, he was occasionally involved in situations of difficulty and danger, from which it required all his ability and constitutional intrepidity to extricate himself. Once, in particular, he permitted himself against his own judgment to join with Wamun Rao in an expedition against the Jeypore territory, when the Rajah came upon their party with a large army; and, though defeated by the astonishing bravery and address of Mr. Thomas, he forced the invaders to retreat with severe loss. By a better regulated system of predatory warfare, however, the Rajah was at length forced into the payment of a regular "black mail," to purchase immunity and quiet for his country.

After a series of successful expeditions against Bikanere, and the Sikhs to the south of the Sutlege, Thomas joined his troops to those of

Ambajee Englia, and was employed against Luckwa Dada, who at this time was in arms against Sindea. On the march he gave a striking proof of his intrepid coolness and presence of mind, in quelling a mutiny among his troops, by personally seizing the leaders, and having one of them blown from a gun. But his engagement with Ambajee was soon brought to a close by a series of the same sort of unaccountable intrigue as had disgusted him with his first Mahratta employers; and he therefore left their army, and retired to his own territories about the end of 1799.

Of the subsequent enterprises of Thomas against Bikanere, Bhutnere, and the Sikhs of Pattialah, and other desert states, we shall only remark that they were constantly recurring, generally with success upon his part; and that he returned some time in 1800 to his own country, after a very various, active, and severe campaign, which he thus himself describes:*—

"Thus ended a campaign of seven months, in which I had been more successful than I could possibly have expected when I first took the field with a force consisting of 5,000 men, and

* Franklin, p. 215.

thirty-six pieces of cannon. I lost—in killed, wounded, and disabled—nearly one-third of my force; but the enemy lost 5,000 persons of all descriptions. I realized nearly 200,000 rupees, exclusive of the pay of my army, and was to receive an additional lakh for the hostages which were delivered up. I explored the country, formed alliances, and was, in short, *dictator* in all the countries belonging to the Sikhs south of the river Sutlege."

"But," continues the author of Thomas's life, "though Mr. Thomas's good fortune may at this period be said to have attained its meridian splendour, a dark cloud which had been gathering overhead was now preparing to discharge its malignant contents." This cloud was the displeasure or jealousy of Sindea, and his commander-in-chief, Perron, who saw with uneasiness the progress of a stranger and adventurer, in the midst of their territories, towards independent power. They had repeatedly offered him service, and invited him to act as commander of his private forces against their common enemies. But this Mr. Thomas had as constantly refused to do,—averring, that, as to serving with Perron, the natural enmity existing between an Englishman and a

Frenchman would always prevent that cordiality of co-operation so necessary to insure success. But he added, that if Sindea should choose to bestow upon him a separate command in the Dekhan, Hindostan, or the Punjab, he would willingly undertake it as soon as arrangements for payment of the troops should be completed.

Such offers and replies led at length to a more definite correspondence, and a negotiation, which, as it was conducted by Perron, was not likely to be favourable to Thomas's interests. But Sindea, with Holcar still in the field, was unwilling to engage in another contest, and therefore sought to temporize. An interview was at length agreed upon between Perron and Thomas, to take place at Bahadurghur. They met accordingly in September 1801, but with something of mutual distrust. Captain Felix Smith, of Perron's brigades, was sent to conduct Mr. Thomas to the Mahratta camp; and he came accompanied by two choice battalions and 300 cavalry.

But Perron's conditions soon brought matters to an issue. He proposed that Thomas should give up entirely his jaedad of Jyjur, and receive in lieu of it 50,000 rupees per month for payment of his battalions, and consider himself from

thenceforth as the servant of Sindea. This, which was but a repetition of offers which he had repeatedly declined before, excited Mr. Thomas's indignation; and, in order to avert further and more hostile discussion — perhaps even some attempt at treachery—he broke up the conference at once, and withdrew in disgust.

It appears extraordinary that the usually clear judgment of Mr. Thomas should not perceive that by such conduct he was throwing away the only rational chance remaining to him of realizing with greater certainty a high station as a soldier, than he could ever rationally hope to do by his own unaided resources, against the jealous enmity of the most potent princes in Hindostan—for it had been his fortune to be opposed to them all, and to have incurred their implacable displeasure. But visions of glory and supreme power appear to have blinded him, and possibly he may still have calculated something on the fickleness of purpose and strong international jealousies of the native powers. However that might be, all hopes of peace had vanished for the present, and Mr. Thomas returned to his own country to make preparations for resisting the storm which was about to burst upon him; while Perron, on his

side, made arrangements for securing his destruction—with what result, Skinner's narrative, to which, after this somewhat long digression, we now return, will show.

CHAPTER VIII.

Skinner's account of George Thomas — Meeting between Thomas and Perron — Negotiations broken off — Army assembles to besiege Georgeghur — Thomas's manœuvres — His battalions attacked — Arrival of Thomas at Georgeghur — Battle before that place — Severe loss on both sides — Interesting meeting between the brothers Skinner — Thomas's conduct after the battle — Cuts his way through Perron's army with 300 sowars — Reaches Hansee — Siege of that town — Intrigues — Desertions — Skirmishes — Storm of the town — Siege of the fort — Negotiations with Thomas — Capitulation — Meeting between Thomas and Bourquoin — Dinner at Bourquoin's tent — Strange fracas — Surrender of the fort — Thomas escorted to Anoopsheher — His character — And death.

"GEORGE THOMAS," says Skinner, "to whom Appa Khundoo Rao had given Hurriana,* had repaired the fort of Hansee; and having raised

* In this way of putting it, Skinner appears to be in a mistake, as may be seen by the sketch above given of Thomas's history.

eight battalions of infantry, with forty pieces of cannon, 1,000 Rohillas, and about 500 Sowars, he began to dart out with these troops, sometimes into the Bikanere country, sometimes into Jeypore, till, having accumulated some lakhs, he determined to attack the Sikhs and take their country from them. He marched as far as the Sutlege river, beat them wherever he met them, and made collections from their country; but he could make good no footing, nor could he take any of their large forts. He returned to Hansee, by the way of Sirhind, Kurnaul, and Paneeput. The Sikhs had assembled at Thanessur, and were very near cutting him to pieces; but he made his retreat good by some manœuvre and false promise. These chieftains then came to Perron, and solicited his assistance in destroying Thomas; and Sindea being referred to on the occasion, issued his orders for Perron to do so, they having agreed to become subsidiary, and having paid him five lakhs of rupees.

Perron, upon this, ordered the 3rd brigade, under Major Louis Bourquoin, and 5,000 regular horse, to proceed to Dehlee; and George Thomas was summoned to that place, to reply to the following proposals:—That he should enter into

Sindea's service, with a brigade of the same strength as those of ours—namely, eight battalions, 300 regular horse, 1,000 Rohillas, and 500 Mewattees, with forty pieces of cannon, for which he was to be allowed 60,000 rupees per month, either in money or jaedad. He was also to be permitted to keep Hurriana, provided he furnished other five battalions for the service. Should these proposals be rejected, he might prepare himself to fight.

Thomas agreed, and marched from Hansee on the 1st August 1801. Our brigade had arrived at Seetaramka-Serai, four côs west of Dehlee, and there encamped. Perron joined us by dak, and Thomas arrived on the 19th August, and encamped two miles distance in front of us. Several meetings took place between him and Perron, and he dined with us repeatedly, and all seemed to be going on well. We saw his troops, who looked well, but were not over-disciplined: his artillery was very fine, and the bullocks particularly good and strong. The only European officers he had, were Captains Hearsey, Hopkins, and Birch; and there were some Europeans acting as serjeants in his artillery.

About the 25th the treaty was broken off, as

Thomas would not agree to send four battalions of his brigade to Oojeine; so he was allowed to march back to his capital at Hansee, and both parties prepared to fight. Perron now sent the 3rd brigade, under Bourquoin, with a large battering train, and two thousand regular Hindostanee horse, to Bahadoorghur, where we encamped; and several Sikh chiefs received orders to assemble there. We remained here till the 10th September, during which time 6,000 Sikh horsemen came and joined us; and Perron went back to Alleeghur by dak. We next marched to Jyjur, within three côs of Georgeghur, a strong fort of Thomas's, where we learned that Thomas himself had marched towards the Sikh country. Three battalions, the battering train, and 100 horse, were now ordered to lay siege to Georgeghur, under command of Captain Smith; while the rest of the army went on to Jheind in pursuit of Thomas. We found, however, that he had moved off towards Futteabad, pretending that he was going to Pattialah. On this we marched in three days from Jheind to Kythull, where, on our arrival, we heard that Thomas had made a forced march and returned to Hansee. Thither we followed, but on the way

were informed that he had gone off to George-ghur. This was 44 côs* from Hansee, and Thomas had made this distance in two days, attacked Smith, and cut up one of his battalions.

It appeared that Smith, on hearing of Thomas being within five côs of him, had raised the siege and commenced his retreat, leaving this one battalion under command of a native, Poorun Sing, a brave old soldier, as a rear-guard. Thomas, with five of his battalions, overtook this single one; and while Smith, with the battering train, gained Jyjur, a fort belonging to us, Poorun Sing drew up his men, and a fierce fight took place. The brave old fellow charged the two first of Thomas's battalions which came up, and drove them off, capturing four pieces of cannon. Thomas himself then headed his five battalions, and came on, but was again repulsed. Unfortunately Poorun Sing was wounded, and fell from his horse, which threw the battalion into confusion; and as Smith, though only two miles distant, would not turn back, they all fell victims, being cut to pieces by Thomas.

Bourquoin had detached Lieutenant Ferdinand Smith, with all the horse, to support his brother,

* Fully sixty-six to seventy miles.

whom he reached in eighteen hours,* though the distance was one hundred côs; and we marched without halting, except two or three hours at a time to refresh the men and cattle, so that we reached Jyjur on the third day. There we halted for one day to rest, and next morning moved on to Baree, within two côs of Georgeghur. Bourquoin then went to reconnoitre the place, and I accompanied him. We found that Thomas had drawn up in one line, having Georgeghur on his right flank, and a large village, which he had fortified; on his left he had a small fort, or ghurree, in which he had stationed 1,000 Rohillas and four pieces of cannon. His rear was likewise defended by a large village.

At three P.M. we moved to the attack, in open columns of companies, except two battalions and two eighteen-pounders, with some horse, which were sent to try his rear. Having come within gunshot we formed line, under a heavy cannonade of thirty-five pieces. The cavalry were on our flanks, but took good care to keep out of cannon reach. Our right had come into a line

* There must be some error here, as 150 miles in eighteen hours, with cavalry, is impossible; but it is given as in the original.

with Thomas's left, when the word was given to wheel into line, and thus we moved to the attack.

Both parties fought well, and disputed the day with great courage. About four P.M. we came within musket range, but found that Thomas had thrown up sand-banks * in his front, which brought our line to a halt. Both musketry and cannon now showered on us like hail, and the men began to fall by hundreds. Two of Thomas's battalions now moved out in columns of companies, under command of Captain Hopkins, a gallant officer. They formed just in front of our left wing, and gave their fire exactly as if they had been at a review: when all had formed, they gave a volley and came to the charge, which completely succeeded in driving back our left wing. However, our golundauze kept to their guns; and the gallant Hopkins having his leg shot off by one of our six-pounders, whilst advancing at the charge, the battalion gave way as soon as he fell, and ran back, taking their leader along with them. Our left wing then rallied and resumed their position, but the fire was so murderous that our whole line was ordered to sit down; as for Thomas's men,

* This deadened the cannon-shot, so that it buried itself without recochetting.

they were sheltered by the sand hillocks in his front.

In this way we remained till night; for neither could Thomas come out to attack us, nor could we attack him. At sunrise we hung out a flag of truce; the firing ceased, and we were allowed to clear the field, which took us till twelve at noon. The flag was then pulled down, and we retired out of cannon reach. But Thomas was so well sickened that he would not follow up the blow.

This was the severest battle I had ever seen; our troops were nearly equal as to infantry—we had each about 8,000 men. Thomas had thirty-five pieces of cannon, we twenty-eight; the cavalry did not come into play. Our loss in killed and wounded was between 3,000 and 4,000; out of seven European officers we had two killed, namely Lieutenants Smith and M'Culloch, and two wounded, Captains Oliver and Rabells. Twenty-five of our tumbrils were blown up by the enemy's shot, and fifteen of our guns dismounted. Thomas had about 2,000 killed and wounded, and Captain Hopkins, who died of his wounds. Had Thomas possessed another officer like him, he would have gained the day.

An interesting circumstance occurred after this

battle which Skinner does not mention, but which many of his friends have heard him tell with great effect. His brother Robert was likewise in this action, though separated from him at a considerable distance; so that neither brother knew how the other had fared. The cannonade was so fierce and continuous, and the slaughter so great, that all was smoke and carnage, and there was little communication between the different parts of the field. When it ceased, however, a report came to Skinner that his brother had been killed; while a similar one reached Robert, as to James. Both, moved by one impulse, ran to the bloody field, without thinking of refreshment or rest, and sought all over it for the body of their brother; but in the darkness, amongst the thousands of corpses torn and mutilated by the cannon shot, none found what he sought, and after a weary and fruitless search, they each returned to the tent of their commanding officer to make their report. By a singular chance they entered from opposite sides at the same moment, and the first thing that met their eyes was the object on which their thoughts were dwelling. They saw nothing else, and the reader may conceive with what feelings they ran and embraced, calling out each

other's names, before the officers that filled the tent.

Skinner here proceeds to criticize the conduct of Thomas, which in truth did not appear consistent with his general decision and gallantry. "We had always heard," he says, "that Thomas was a brave, active, and clever soldier, and an able general; but we were surprised that he now permitted us to remain for fifteen days without attempting to attack us, or to make good his retreat to Hansee, for there was no doubt on our minds that, had he tried either plan, he would have succeeded. The state of our guns, and the spirits of our soldiery, was such, that had Thomas shown any inclination to move towards us, we should have got out of his reach; for our commander, Major Lewis Bourquoin, was not only a coward but a fool. He was one of those who had got on by flattery; and, had it not been for Captain Burnear, a Frenchman, we should certainly have lost the day, for the Major was not seen at all during the battle,—and our being saved from total destruction was entirely owing to the exertions of Captain Burnear, who was a brave and able soldier.

Thomas now gave up all the management to

Captain Hearsey, who joined him a few days after the battle, and to his native officers, while he himself took to drinking. These officers, instead of inducing him to retreat to his capital, began to fortify his camp, and gave out that some refractory Mahrattas were coming to their assistance. Reinforcements now began to join us from various quarters. Colonel Pedron came with five battalions of the 4th brigade, two battalions were sent by the Begum Sumroo, and Perron sent five battalions from Hessing's brigade, at Agra; and horsemen to the amount of 5,000 also came to join the force, so that Thomas was completely surrounded.

Skirmishes now took place every day, but he was always thrashed back into his lines. Supplies and forage began to get scarce; his soldiers became dissatisfied, and began to desert. One of his chieftains, named Shitaub Khan, who commanded the fort of Georgeghur, was enticed over by Pedron, and informed us that the troops, having been for two days without grain, were living on sheep and bullocks; so that Thomas must either give in at once, or make a start with his horse to Hansee. On this, Pedron immediately hoisted a flag, and proclaimed that all soldiers

taking refuge under it should get quarter. About 200 came over that day, and we were ordered to get within cannon reach, and to keep on the alert at night.

About nine at night on the 10th November, Thomas, with 300 of his brave horsemen, made a dart through the five battalions commanded by Colonel Hessing; and, although the whole of the cavalry was sent in pursuit, he made good his escape to Hansee from Georgeghur, about sixty miles, in fourteen hours. All his guns and camp were taken, and his soldiers having laid down their arms, were offered service, but they refused it with contempt. They all appeared very much attached to him, and several native officers, who had been a long time in his service, rent their clothes and turned beggars, swearing that they never would serve as soldiers again. Captains Hearsey and Birch, and two other Europeans, went along with him.

Pedron completed the 3rd brigade from the five battalions of the 4th, which he had brought with him from Alleeghur; but it was unfortunately Bourquoin under whom we were ordered to attack Hansee. The 3rd brigade, with a large battering train, 500 regular Hindostanee horse, and about

5,000 Sikhs, marched for that place, while Pedron went back to Alleeghur.

When we reached Sewannee, seven côs south-east of Hansee, we received information that Thomas had choked up all the wells within six côs round the place. Bursee, four côs in our front, had five pukha wells; and Hansee was three côs distant from Bursee. I was ordered, with two battalions and all the pioneers, to clear out one of these wells,—and this I effected in two days; after which, the troops marched, and all the rest were cleared out. We discovered, too, that the little tanks of water near Hansee had been defiled with pork and beef.

Bourquoin reconnoitred the fort several times, and formed his plan of attack. Thomas had still about 5,000 foot and 200 horse, with two 24, four 12, and six 6-pounder guns; and he had fortified strongly three outworks, about a hundred yards from the town. One to the south-east, at the Bursee gate, was defended by sixty men; another at the Kootub gate, to the south, by 100 men; and one on the west, towards Hissar, with 200 men.

At three in the morning, Bourquoin ordered these three works to be attacked. Two bat-

talions, under Lieut. Mackenzie, were directed to assault that towards the Bursee gate; two others, under my command, to that at the Kootub gate; while Captain Bunnear, with two more, was ordered to that at the Hissar gate. We arrived at our destination near daybreak, and led on our respective columns. Mackenzie and I both succeeded without much trouble, the enemy's parties running into the town. But Captain Bunnear having got between his outwork and the town, and thus cutting off their retreat, the men resisted obstinately, and beat back the party. Bunnear rallied them, but in so doing was killed in the ditch,—on which his men rushed on, carried the place, and put the whole of the enemy's party to the sword. On our side the whole loss did not exceed 200 men in killed and wounded, but the death of Bunnear was much felt in all our circle, and especially by the soldiery.

These three works were fixed as points for our trenches, and between them three batteries were ordered to be erected. During the siege of the town nothing was done to interrupt us by Thomas, though the garrison kept up their fire from musketry and cannon pretty well. The battering guns then opened, and the walls of the

town being breached, three parties of 1,500 men were told off for the storm. One was under command of Lieut. Mackenzie; a second under command of my brother, Lieut. Skinner; and the third under my own.

At dawn of day, on the 3rd December, the signal of attack was given. Mackenzie was opposed to Captain Hearsey: my brother to a native, Ellias Beg; and I had to contend with Captain Birch. Both Mackenzie and my brother made good their way in, after some resistance; but Birch, who defended his post well, beat me back twice with great loss. Burning choppers, powder-pots, and everything he could get hold of, were showered upon us; but our greatest loss was from the powder-pots, which greatly disheartened the men: however, after a desperate struggle, I drove them from the breach. Just as I had got up, I saw Birch about twenty yards from me taking aim at me with a double-barrelled gun, the contents of which, both barrels, he fired at me; but "the sweet little cherub" saved me from them. I immediately levelled my javelin, and, putting my shield to my breast, darted it at him, and took off his hat,—on which he set off and joined his men, who were now leaving the

wall, and retreated about 200 yards behind houses.

All my storming party had now got in, and we moved towards the *chowk* or centre of the bazaar, where we saw our columns. The fight now became desperate. Thomas had come down from the fort with 1,000 of his chosen men, and, attacking the column commanded by Lieutenant Skinner, drove it back to the walls of the town. I immediately hastened to my brother's assistance, and beat Thomas back to the gate of the fort.

All our columns having now joined in the chowk, Thomas made another attempt, bringing up a 6-pounder, and, after great resistance, drove us out of the chowk. We were then joined by our reserve of a battalion, with a couple of 6-pounders, and, in spite of a very obstinate resistance by Thomas, drove him back to the fort. About noon we had complete possession of the town; but it cost us dear, as the slaughter on our side was very great, for several times we had come to the sword (that is, hand to hand with the sword). My brother got a cut at Thomas, but his armour had saved him. We lost, in killed and wounded, 1,600 men. Lieutenant Mackenzie was wounded,

and several of our native officers were killed and wounded.

Bourquoin, soon after, arrived with 3,000 dismounted troopers and two battalions, who took up our position, and we were allowed to go to the rear to refresh ourselves. Next morning the guns moved into the town, our trenches were commenced within 200 yards of the fort, and a battery of eight 18-pounders was erected in the centre of the chowk. Thomas, on his side, made every preparation to defend the fort; but, in consequence of the losses he had sustained, his men were dispirited and little to be depended on. The siege was, however, carried on with great spirit on both sides: several sallies were made upon our trenches, and sometimes Thomas drove us out, at others we gave him a proper thrashing. But our battering guns produced no effect, for the fort of Hansee being a solid mound of earth, the balls merely buried themselves in it, without in the least shaking the rampart.

In consequence, we commenced mining, and advanced to within ten yards of the crown work —called, in Hindostanee, *goongas;* when Bourquoin began to intrigue with Thomas's men, and wrote them letters promising them six months'

pay and permanent service if they would give up the fort and Thomas. These letters were rolled upon arrows, and shot into the fort from our trenches, and they were answered in the same way by Thomas's men, who agreed to give him up, but said there was some misunderstandings among themselves; but, as soon as the parties should unite, due notice of it should be sent.

Thomas was not ignorant of these intrigues, and kept himself on his guard. He had still about 1,500 faithful and trustworthy soldiers, who were posted with himself in the inner fort. On our side, Bourquoin was the only French officer, the rest were country-borns and English, who felt indignant at this underhand treachery, and agreed that it would be disgraceful if through such intrigues Thomas should be taken prisoner and put into confinement; for Bourquoin had declared in bravado that so he would use that blackguard Englishman when he got hold of him. This was language which we did not admire; but knowing Bourquoin to be more of a talker than a doer, we managed to persuade him into offering terms, assuring him that he would himself gain a higher name by inducing Thomas to capitulate than by catching him by treachery. It was one day after

tiffin, when the wine he had drunk had put him in high spirits and good humour, that we plied him thus, and at last he called out, in his broken English, "Well, gentlemen, you do as you like—I give power; he be one damn Englishman, your countryman, that treat their children very ill." He meant that the country-borns were very ill used in not being admitted into the Company's service.

We lost no time in making use of this power, but sent Captain Smith into the fort to treat with Thomas. That gentleman received him with great joy, and told him of the treachery that was brewing among his men; on which Smith said that he was sent by the whole English officers (meaning European and country-borns) to save him from dishonour. Thomas thanked him, and begged he would return and say that he would accept of any terms the officers should make for him. With this reply Smith returned; and, after some trouble, we prevailed on Bourquoin to grant the following terms,—namely:—That Thomas should be permitted to go free, with all his private property—that is, ready money, wearing apparel, shawls, jewels, and all household stuff; and that one of our battalions should escort him

safe to the Company's territory. That his soldiers should be allowed to march out with their private arms, but that all arms belonging to Thomas should be left in the fort.

These conditions being signed by Bourquoin, Smith was sent next morning with them into the fort, and Thomas was glad to agree to them. It was settled that the fort should be given up in two days; and, meantime, a cessation of hostilities on both sides was proclaimed. A meeting took place between Thomas and Bourquoin, at the bungalow of the former, on the bank of the Umtee tank; and all the officers, except myself, who was left in command of the trenches, were permitted to go and see him. He received them all very courteously, and was particularly gracious to my brother, whom he embraced, and showed him the cut he had received from him on his belt. After spending two hours together, during which time Bourquoin and he became great friends, he returned to the fort.

Bourquoin then invited him to dine with us all on the 21st, which Thomas agreed to; and all the officers were permitted to come to dine in camp, the trenches being left under charge of the native officers. Hearsey and Birch spent the whole day

with us, talking of our various exploits; but it was about seven in the evening when Thomas arrived with about fifty of his sowars, much affected, as it appeared, by his misfortunes. About eight we sat down; and, after dinner, did all we could to cheer Thomas, taking great care to avoid all conversation about our attacks, or anything that might give him offence. By eleven o'clock all of us had got pretty merry with drinking bumpers to such toasts as "General Perron," "George Thomas," &c., and Thomas was quite happy; when, all of a sudden, Bourquoin called out—"Let us drink to the success of Perron's arms." At this we all turned up our glasses; and Thomas, on hearing and seeing this, burst into tears, and, putting his hand to his sword, called out to Bourquoin that it was not to him but to his own ill fate that his fall was due, and (drawing his sword)—"One Irish sword," said he, "is still sufficient for a hundred Frenchmen." Bourquoin, in terror at this, jumped from his chair, and ran out of the tent, calling out for his guard. Then Thomas's sowars, hearing the hubbub, also rushed in; and we, apprehensive of a row, called out to them to keep off, as it was only the sahib that was drunk: while Thomas, in the midst

of us, kept waving his sword, and calling out in Hindostanee to look how he had made the d——d Frenchman run like a jackall! It was not without much persuasion, and no small fear of some accident, that we got Thomas at last to sheath his sword. We then got the soldiers out of the tent; and, when Thomas had sat down, we explained to him that the wine had made Bourquoin forget himself, but that he must not regard it as an insult, but agree to make it up. To this he at once consented; and, going to seek Bourquoin, we brought him in, and he immediately shook Thomas's hand, and told him he was sorry for what he had said.

A few more glasses now went round; and, perceiving that they were getting still more "jolly," being captain of the day in the trenches, I rode off to the town, and cautioned the men not to *challenge* Thomas's sowars, for that their master was drunk. About midnight Thomas arrived by the Bursee gate, where there was a guard of a naik and six sepoys, whom I had omitted to caution; so, when he came close, the sentinel challenged. Thomas's man replied "Sahib Bahaudoor," as he was usually called by his men. The sentinel replied that he knew of no Sahib

Bahaudoor, so that he must stop until he got permission from his officer to pass. Thomas, who was much in liquor, now turned round to his sowars, and said—"Could any one have stopped Sahib Bahaudoor at this gate but one month ago?" "No, no," replied they; on which he dismounted, drew his sword, and making a cut at the poor sentinel, smote off his right hand. Up got the guard immediately on this, and gave the alarm; but, fortunately, I was only a few yards distant from the gate, and on hearing the noise ran up. There I found Thomas walking up and down with his naked sword in his hand, and Hearsey and several of his sowars, who had dismounted, endeavouring to lay hold of him. At length a rissaldar, named Meer Mahummudee, caught hold of him from behind, when the rest ran in, and taking his sword from him, sent for his palankeen, and had him carried into the fort. Next morning, having come to himself, Hearsey told him what he had done, on which he sent for the soldier he had wounded, and gave him 500 rupees. He also wrote an apology to Bourquoin, expressing his concern for what had happened.

On the 29th Thomas marched out, and encamped near us; and on the 1st of January he

marched with a battalion of ours, under Captain Smith, who escorted him safe to Anoopsheher. He carried with him about a lakh and a half of rupees in ready cash, and above a lakh more in shawls, jewels, and other property.

A few words more will suffice to conclude the history of this remarkable man, whose enterprise and energy seemed to merit a happier fate. In the middle of January 1802 he reached the English frontier; and having inspected the state of his funds, and the wreck of his property, he found himself possessed of no more than might suffice to procure the decent comforts of life in his native country, whither it was his intention to retire. But this was not granted to him. He left the upper provinces, and, after a residence of some time at Benares, was proceeding down the river, when illness, probably brought on by his late severe exertions and exposure, arrested his progress near the military cantonments of Berhampore,—and there he died, and there he lies buried.

Thomas, at this time only forty-six years of age, is described as of a tall and martial figure, and great strength of body; of bold features and erect carriage, not unexpressive of that vigour of

mind and intrepidity of spirit which enabled him to conceive, and qualified him to achieve, those designs which it was the object of his ambition to accomplish. Amongst these, his favourite schemes were the conquest of the Punjab, and of the countries extending down the Indus, on both of which he gave detailed and digested plans for the consideration of the British government. Nor were his intentions selfish; on the contrary, he desired but to be the instrument of conquest for his country. "I have nothing in view by this plan," said he, "but the welfare of my king and my country; it could not be concerted and prepared in time to aid me in the approaching conflict,* and therefore it is not to aggrandize myself that I have thought of it; but I shall be sorry to see my conquests fall into the hands of the Mahrattas; I wish to give them to my king, and to serve him during the remainder of my days,—and this I can only do as a soldier in this part of the world."

Thomas was intimately acquainted with the spirit and character of the natives of India, and eminently qualified to guide and command them.

* With the Mahratta powers, which at that time was brewing.

His military talents may be estimated from the history of his actions; and his ability in providing resources in the hour of need were most remarkable. His manners were grave and gentle, and his courtesy to all evinced a general wish to please. He was frank, generous, and humane; and though subject to sudden ebullitions of temper, in which he occasionally committed acts of which he soon repented, and as soon atoned for, his conduct to the families of those who fell or were disabled in his service, is a convincing proof of the benevolence and philanthropy of his heart; and the devoted attachment of his personal followers and chosen soldiers is the best evidence of their appreciation of his character.

CHAPTER IX.

Skinner goes on leave to see his father—Rejoins his brigade within the twelvemonth—Accompanies Perron to Oojein—Reception of Perron by Sindea—His life or liberty treacherously attempted—Disgusted, he resigns the service—Returns to Alleeghur—Rumours of misunderstanding with the English—Confirmed—Perron's plan for a campaign against the English—Sketch of the state and respective forces of the belligerents—British subjects (officers) refuse to serve against the English—Discharged from the Mahratta service in consequence—Arrive at Lord Lake's head-quarters—Lord Lake's reception of Skinner—Insincerity of Perron and the French officers—His specious demonstrations of resistance—Jealousies in the Mahratta camp—Perron flies to Agra—Lord Lake assaults and takes Alleeghur—Five companies of sepoys surprised by M. Fleurea—Fleurea surrenders to Lord Lake—Intrigues of Bourquoin—And of Perron—Perron surrenders to Lord Lake, and is courteously received—Battle of Dehlee—Skinner is appointed to a charge of irregular horse.

"About the 25th of January," continues Skinner, "after placing a battalion, as garrison, in the

fort, we marched to Futteeabad, in order to settle the Bhuttee country, while I, having received a letter from my father at Berhampore, desiring that I should come and see him, applied to Perron for leave to do so. This being granted, I left the brigade at Futteeabad on the 15th of February, and marched to Cawnpore. From thence I embarked, in a budjerow, for Berhampore, and joined my father in the end of April. After spending a couple of months with him, I went to Calcutta to see my sister, Mrs. Templeton, and then returned to Berhampore for another month. On the 1st of July I took leave of my father, and rejoined General Perron, at Coel, in January 1803: at my own request I was posted to the second brigade; and having received command of my old regiment, joined them in the country of Meerut.

Perron was now sent for by Sindea to Oojeine, and ordered the second brigade to accompany him. He joined us at Khoshalghur, with 500 sowars, and from thence we reached Oojeine on the 20th of March. His reception here was not of a nature to gratify an officer like Perron. It was not until the 25th that he was invited to call on the Maha Raja; and then, having proceeded

to the Durbar with 200 horsemen, he was kept waiting in the kutchery (or office) at the gate for two hours, while Sindea was amusing himself by flying kites. Not a chieftain came out to meet him, while he sat in company with certain discontented chiefs of note, among whom was old Gopaul Rao Bhow, who was at the head of the army. This officer, addressing Perron, said, "Observe to what the old Pateil's reign has come: good soldiers are all forgotten,—none but dirty time-servers and flatterers can get on; but mark my words, he will soon find out his error, but not until too late to mend it." To this Perron replied, that he was but a servant, and all he knew was to obey. This sort of conversation went on until the Choleedars announced the approach of Sindea, when we all rose, and Perron went up and presented his nuzzur. Sindea just touched it, and asked him if he was well; to which Perron made the usual reply of "by your favour"; and then we all, in turn, presented our nuzzurs, and were desired to sit down.

In half an hour Sindea dismissed the Durbar, and desired Perron to return to camp, which he did, completely disgusted with the cold and slighting treatment he had received from his master.

Eight days now passed without the slightest notice or message from Sindea to Perron; and Gopaul Rao, a great friend of the latter, signified to him that he had best be on his guard, as the Maha Raja had resolved to lay hold of him. Several secret visits passed at this time between Perron and Gopaul Rao, whilst Colonel Sutherland and Major Brownrigg were intriguing against the former.

Perron, aware of the intrigues of his enemies, became depressed and perturbed; when, at length, matters seemed likely to be brought to a crisis. A day was appointed for holding a durbar, to which Perron and all his European officers were invited. At this durbar Sindea, together with his father-in-law, Surjee Rao Ghatkea, had formed a plot to lay hold of him; and had employed 500 Pathans, belonging to Bahadour Khan (a chief then at Malaghur), and several others of his own favourites—his companions in vice and debauchery—to carry this purpose into effect.

Perron, however, was made aware of this plot, and ordered all the native officers of both brigades, as low as the rank of jemadar, as well as all the European officers, to come fully armed to attend his visit to Sindea. Our full uniform

included a brace of pistols attached to our sword-belts, and these he directed us to bring loaded. We amounted in all to 300 native and thirty European officers; and in this state of preparation we marched to the durbar, a large tent pitched for the occasion.

At the hour of nine in the morning, headed by Perron, we reached the tent. Sindea rose to receive us, and we all presented our nuzzurs. We were then directed to sit down on the left side of the presence, the right being occupied by the Pathans, who regarded us very fiercely. When we were seated, Sindea, turning to Perron, observed that the invitation had only been extended to himself and his European officers, to which Perron replied, that in arranging his suite he had only followed the old rule laid down by himself and his uncle; and this answer silenced him. All this time we sat quiet, eyeing each other, whilst much whispering went on between Sindea, Gopaul Rao, and Surjee Rao. I believe it was Gopaul Rao who persuaded him not to attempt any violence, for that not only himself, but the whole party would be cut to pieces by the fine body of men whom Perron had brought in.

Sindea then ordered the Pathans to retire, and they all got up, looking at us as if they would eat us, while our men sat laughing at them with the most perfect unconcern. When they were gone, Sindea and Surjee Rao began to flatter, and endeavour to throw him off his guard; but he, assisted as he was by his old friend Gopaul Rao, was too old a soldier to be so cajoled; and so khiluts were ordered for us all, and after receiving them we presented our nuzzurs, which he graciously accepted. Betel was then handed round, and we received leave to retire.

Perron then got up, and taking off his sword, laid it down at Sindea's feet, saying that he had grown old in his service, and that it did not become him to be disgraced by dissolute knaves and bullies; that all he wanted was his discharge. Then, addressing us, he said, that henceforth we must look to Sindea, for that he, for his part, was too old now to brook affronts, and must retire. Sindea, on this, rose and embraced Perron, telling him that he regarded him as his uncle, and that he had no idea what had offended him. Compliments without measure passed between both parties, but, on taking leave, Perron cautioned Sindea to beware of Surjee Rao Ghatkea, for he

would be his ruin,—a caution in which all the old Mahratta chiefs joined cordially, and applauded the part which Perron had taken.

At length we returned to camp, where several days were occupied in the transmission of messages to and from the court, and in visits from chieftains who were sent to make matters up. But Perron was too indignant to be pacified. Colonel Sutherland, in the mean time, was sent to the 2nd brigade, and Colonel Pholman to the 1st, while Major Brownrigg was put in arrest under fixed bayonets. On the 15th of April, Perron marched with the 2nd brigade, having requested Sindea to send Ambajee to take charge of the troops in Hindostan, to which I believe he agreed.

On the 1st of June we arrived at Alleeghur, Perron still persisting in his purpose of retiring from the service, and Ambajee being appointed commander-in-chief, or soobah, of Hindostan. Our brigade was now ordered to cantoon at Secundra, near Dehlee, when news arrived that Holcar had defeated the Peishwah, and cut up four battalions of our 1st brigade, under command of Captain Dawes, at Poona. The Peishwah, thus situated, had flown to the English for

protection, and the whole Mahratta empire was thrown into the greatest agitation. Rumours came from Sindea's camp of disagreements between himself and the English Resident, and alarms of an English war began to be spread. Great preparations took place in all the armies; and Sindea, in these circumstances, succeeded in persuading Perron to remain a year longer in the service.

About the 1st of July, it became publicly known that Sindea and almost all the native powers had fallen out with the English. The 4th brigade was now completed, and sent to join Sindea at Oojeine. Perron, on his part, made great preparations at Alleeghur. His plan for acting against the English was as follows:—Gholaum Mahomed, the Rohilla chief, was engaged to commence in the Katahoor, and overrun the country towards Lucknow; while Umbajee, with all his horse, should cross at Cawnpore, and march down to Allahabad. The brigades under Perron's command were to assemble at Dehlee; while Perron himself, with about 20,000 horse, composed of his own regular cavalry, the Sikh chief's contingent, and all the horse belonging to the petty Rajahs of the Doab, were to

occupy that country, and harass the British troops forming at Cawnpore under Lord Lake. The Mahrattas were to hoist the King's imperial colours. Sindea, with all his own forces, undertook to watch and harass General Wellesley in the Dekhan. The battalions of the Nagpore Rajah were to march through the Rewah country towards Calcutta, each commander being instructed to burn and destroy everything in their course in the countries through which they passed.

Although it is not the purpose of this narrative to enter on the wide subject of the Mahratta war of 1803, it may interest the reader to learn here generally, what the condition and relative force of the respective parties was, at least in Hindostan, where Skinner himself was exclusively engaged. The Mahratta princes themselves were so utterly at variance, that little of combination was to be looked for among them; the hereditary enmity between Sindea and Holcar prevented any coalition on their part; and it was the growing power and hostility of Holcar that had led the Peishwah to seek the assistance of the English government, and which led to the famous treaty of Bassein. Thus the principal confederates against the Eng-

lish were, Dowlut Rao Sindea, and Rughoojee Bhounslah, with Shumshere Bahaudur, and their forces have been estimated as follows, on the authorities followed by Mill, Grant Duff, and other historians.

Sindea and Rughoojee together, had about 100,000 men, of whom 50,000 were Mahratta horse, generally good; 30,000 regular infantry and artillery, commanded by Europeans; the rest were half disciplined troops belonging to Rughoojee. Sindea is understood to have had more than 500 pieces of cannon, all in excellent order, and manned by stanch artillerists. Shumshere Bahaudur's troops have been estimated at 10,000 to 12,000 men of all sorts.

Of these, the army of Hindostan, under Perron's command, consisted of 16,000 to 17,000 regular infantry, and from 15,000 to 20,000 horse, with the usual proportion of artillery, not less than twenty pieces. To oppose this force, Lord Lake had but 10,500 men, all ready to march, at Cawnpore, besides which, 3,500 under his orders were stationed at Allahabad, to oppose Shumshere Bahaudur. It is to be remarked, that though Holcar had not as yet joined the Mahratta confederacy against the British, and that the Raje-

poot princes had taken no active part in what was going on, there is little doubt that had the British been unfortunate at the outset, they would soon have had these additional powers to cope with, as well as the Sikhs of the Punjab and the states of the Desert, which would have added a force of 100,000 more men to that of their present enemies. From this it may be judged how critical our situation at this time was, how important to our very existence in India, that success should attend every effort of our arms from the first, and how invaluable were the gallant services of those brave men who secured it to their country, and wrestled it from such fearful odds.

On the 28th of August, a most important change took place in the condition of all the English and country-born officers in the service of Sindea. Captain Stewart,* a country-born, and Captain Carnegie, a Scotchman, having signified that they would not serve against the English, all of us, nine in number, were summarily

* A very amiable and accomplished person, son to General Stewart, of the Honourable East India Company's service, long since dead. The writer remembers well his account of these transactions.

dismissed, our arrears were paid up, and we were ordered to quit the Mahratta country. This was a most unexpected blow to many of us, but there was no help for it. My brother went off to the Begum Sumroo, and I, with five more country-borns, resolved to go to Sindea himself to seek redress. On the 29th we arrived at Alleeghur, just as General Lake was marching up with his army. Perron had made a show of hostilities with his cavalry, but they quickly dispersed, and General Lake encamped before the fort. For our parts, we found ourselves surrounded all in a garden near the Sasnee gate of Coel, from whence in the evening we went to General Lake, and were very kindly received.

Captains Stewart and Carnegie were, as Skinner remarks, the first of the officers who tendered to Perron their resignation, declaring that they could not fight against the British arms,—a measure which enraged Perron so much, that he gave a general discharge to all British and British country-borns in the service. Skinner and several others remonstrated against this, but in vain; and having been warned not to be found within reach of the Mahratta camp after a certain

time, he went off, with four others, to Agra, whither he had previously sent his family. On the day of the battle of Alleeghur, he and his companions had pitched in a garden, on the way thither, during the heat of the sun, when, hearing of the battle, Skinner proposed still to go to Perron, to press their remonstrances in person, and declare their intention of sticking by him to the last. But by-and-bye they saw some of the Mahratta horse passing by in a disorderly manner, and in a little Perron himself, in confusion, without his hat. Skinner went up to him immediately, and told him that he had come to remonstrate against his dismissal, and had determined to remain and share his fortunes. "Ah! no, no!" replied Perron,—"it is all over; these fellows" (the horse) "have behaved ill: do not ruin yourself, go over to the British; it is all up with us." "By no means," replied Skinner; "it is not so; let us rally yet, and make a stand,—you may depend upon having many yet to fight for you." But Perron still shook his head, and after a little said, in his bad English, "Ah, no, Monsieur Skinner,—I not trust—I not trust; I fraid you all go." Skinner, on this, got angry, and retorted, saying, that in that case it was *he* that was

the traitor, if he meant to proceed in that way; if, on account of one or two ingrates, he should lose to his master the services of many faithful persons, this was the way to ruin the cause; but that, if he persevered in doing all for the best, no doubt he might still hold the country and effectively serve his master. But Perron, who had made up his mind upon the matter, still refused to have anything more to do either with him or any of his brother officers; on which Skinner declared he would go to Sindea himself and complain. Perron answered impatiently, and biding no further parley, shook his head, and rode off, saying, "Good-bye, Monsieur Skinner; — no trust—no trust." "Then you may go to the devil!" roared Secunder, and rode back to the garden, where he related all that had happened to his comrades, saying that he was resolved to go to Sindea and relate to him the whole case.

Skinner had, in fact, at this time not the smallest idea of entering the British service, or even leaving that of Sindea: he was a complete native,—sought nothing better than to live and die in the service he had been brought up in. He had no tie to Britain; his father was dead, his brother provided for in the Begum Soomroo's

service; he knew little or nothing of his other relatives, and was himself a soldier of fortune—at large, and free to choose for himself—and he desired to stick to the colours he had hitherto served under.

Carnegie, a sensible man, who was one of the party, then came forward:—"No," said he, "Sindea would never place any confidence; we should be suspected by all, and there would be an end to all promotion, if not to safety. Let us seek for protection from the British commander, who will be glad to afford it to us." Long did Skinner oppose this plan, for he did not then know his countrymen, and reposed little confidence in British faith; but at last he gave in, and they all proceeded to a fort near at hand, in possession of the British, there to demand protection.

They were met by an officer (named Clark) who had command at the gate, and who told them, somewhat rudely, they could have no protection there, and that they had better go on to the camp. They left him, in considerable indignation at the treatment they had received, and, on proceeding, were overtaken by, or overtook a gentleman, attended by two orderlies, who, seeing

they were strangers, inquired who they were. On being informed that they were Mahratta officers, who had quitted the service and were seeking protection, he also said he could do nothing for them, and that they should go to the camp of the commander-in-chief, who alone could give them an answer. They then mentioned the repulse they had already met with, and begged that a soldier might be sent to secure them a better reception, which, without such an introduction, they feared might not be afforded them. This, Colonel Everard Brown, for he it was, somewhat ungraciously, as they thought, refused to do; telling them, rather cavalierly, to find their way as they best could. On this they left him, and Skinner, complimenting Carnegie upon the politeness of his countrymen, led the way towards their tents. Carnegie, a little piqued, said he would at least make one more trial; and taking with him Ferguson, another of their comrades, rode on to the British camp. Near this they were met by Captain ——, who, having inquired who they were, received them very kindly, and took them into camp. He then inquired whether they did not require some food, as they looked exhausted; and then said he would

take them to Lord Lake, the commander-in-chief. When they were refreshed, he inquired after the two Skinners, who, he said, were sons of his particular friend; and hearing James was of their party, he sent a letter off immediately, to request, in the most urgent manner, that he would come to him at once.

This letter overtook Skinner just as the sun was going down; and, though he put little faith in its professions, it induced him to delay his departure; and soon afterwards came Carnegie and Ferguson, hurraing, and calling out to him that they had now found out the right way. Still it was with difficulty they persuaded him to go to the camp, very dubious as to the event. When they reached it, they were first introduced to Lord Lake, who received them with great good will and kindness; and were then ushered into the mess-room, where they dined, and met with so much attention as seemed to them perfectly marvellous,—in short, they were as capitally treated as they had at first thought themselves ill-used.

Next morning, after breakfasting at mess, they were again taken to Lord Lake; and then Skinner's doubts recommenced, for, on being asked

which of them was the senior officer, he was at once pointed out as such by the rest. He was then questioned particularly as to the force and numbers of Perron's troops, on which Skinner was by no means disposed to be communicative, and he confined himself to such matters as were easily to be discovered without betraying what might be regarded as secrets. After some time, he was asked if he would take service, and raise a troop of horse in English pay. But this he at once and decidedly refused,—for he never, he said, could fight against his old comrades, nor draw sword against Sindea or Perron. He was then requested to write to the different officers serving under Perron, and to inform them that, if they came over, they should receive favourable terms. This he declined doing, assuring those who proposed it that it would be perfectly useless —they never would come over, or believe him; moreover, he warned them that, if messengers were sent with such letters, their lives would not be safe. His comrades, however, did not see the same difficulties; and at length he, as well as they, did write some letters, which were accordingly sent. But the hucarrahs who carried those of his comrades were put to death; while the

general attachment felt for Skinner's name proved the safety of his messenger.

The result of this experiment, and of a longer acquaintance with Skinner, was, that he became a great favourite with Lord Lake, who consulted him much on all occasions; while so greatly prepossessed was Skinner himself by the affability and kindness of his lordship, that he attached himself very sincerely to his person and the service,—insomuch that, after the battle of Dehlee, little more than a fortnight after his joining the camp near Alleeghur, we find him accepting the command of a body of horse, on the express stipulation that he was never to be employed against his old master, Sindea. This command took its origin in the coming over of a body of Perron's horse, after the dispersion of Bourquoin's force at Dehlee. These, when they were asked whom they would choose for their commander, with one voice said, that if the "Burrah Secunder" was there, he was the man. He was accordingly employed, as will be seen, in keeping the Doab open until the war with Holcar commenced, when he became again more actively engaged.

One anecdote, which the writer believes to be perfectly correct, will serve to show Skinner's

character in its true light, and exemplify the footing on which he stood with Lord Lake. A Patan soldier came to him one day, during that war, and said, provided that a jagheer and a lakh of rupees were insured to him, he would engage to assassinate Holcar. Skinner, indignant at so cowardly a proposition, was at first disposed to spurn the villain with contempt; but considering that false reports might get abroad, he thought it best to go at once and communicate the proposition to Lord Lake. "Well," said his lordship, "and what do you think? do you believe he will do as he says?" "I think," said Skinner, "he very likely may; but there is little faith to be reposed on the word of a man who proves once a traitor." "What, then, do you think I should do?" inquired his lordship. "Does your lordship wish me to speak the truth freely?" asked Skinner. "Undoubtedly, I do," replied Lord Lake. "Then," said Skinner, "I repeat that it is very likely the man may do what he says: but what will be said in Hindostan of Lord Lake and of the English?—they will say that, not being able to succeed against Holcar by fair means, they had recourse to treachery and assassination. If you will be advised by me, let the man be publicly

told that we give no encouragement to such acts, and let him meet the contempt he deserves: for a much smaller reward I will undertake to find a hundred men who will engage to carry off the head of Holcar from the field of battle. Let the man, however, be saved from the ruin which would inevitably befall him if abandoned after such a disclosure—let him be furnished with what will keep him from want." "You are right," said his lordship; "it is the fit way to deal with him: send for the man, and do as you have yourself proposed."

The man was accordingly sent for, and, in the presence of his own corps, and in public, Skinner told him that the English neither encouraged nor desired treachery—they could well do without it; that as to him, he was a traitor and merited death; but that, on account of the feeling he had manifested to be useful to them, they would give him 100 rupees for life, if he chose to stay in their honest service. "And now, my friends," said he, addressing the corps, "whoever brings me Holcar's head from the field of battle, fairly slain, shall have a splendid reward from me."

In an instant the man's character was gone in the opinion of all who heard the disclosure—he

never could hold his head up afterwards. And, strange to say, he was not long after slain at the battle of ——,* when far in the rear, and before any other man had been touched. Skinner, who with Lord Lake witnessed the circumstance, exclaimed,—"Now, Lord Sahib! see how treachery has met its deserts. That shot surely had its orders,—you see, not a man has yet been hurt, and yet that fellow, though skulking in the rear, has got the blow intended for him."

The game was now up, and Sindea's cause was lost. But had the conduct of Sindea himself been more marked by prudence and ability, and had Perron been honest and sincere, instead of a traitor as he was, the Mahrattas would have given much trouble to the English.

Sindea had abandoned himself to luxury and debauchery, and had destroyed or disgusted all his old experienced generals, while his chieftains were faint hearted, and by no means inclined to fight. Perron, in whom he trusted much, had not only disgusted all the Sirdars in Hindostan, by his pride and overbearing deportment, but had bestowed the command of the troops, the forts, and the districts, upon his own relations and con-

* The name of the battle has been forgotten.

nections, most of whom being men of low extraction and without education, thought only of making money, and looking after their own interests. These, like Perron himself, so far from being sincerely attached to his service, only affected a shew of zeal, in order to blind the natives until they should have an excuse to be off to the Company's provinces, whither they had already remitted the greater part of their wealth.

To name a few of those who thus made a shew of being stanch, while inwardly treacherous, I must begin with Perron himself, who not only was at the head of Sindea's infantry, but commanded all the tributary Rajahs of Hindostan.

The important fort of Alleeghur he had placed under the command of Colonel Pedron. Agra, the key of Hindostan, had been bestowed on his nephew, Colonel George Hessing. Major Deridon, Major Bourquoin, Lieutenant Felose, and others of his relations, had respectively command of brigades in the Dekhan, and had much influence with the troops.

The use they made of this was to derange in every way they could the system of the army, with a view to making their escape the more easily. They endeavoured to shake the confi-

dence of the men in Sindea, and intrigued to have all the English and other European officers dismissed, declaring that they would assuredly go over to the British; and thus secured to themselves the undivided control over the army.

Perron made a great display at Alleeghur. He pitched the royal tent, and proclaimed to the troops, that Sindea had taken up arms in the king of Dehlee's cause, to defend his throne and country from the tyrant English, who wished to deprive him of it. He kept with himself at Alleeghur only 5,000 horse, and ordered all the brigades in Hindostan to march to Dehlee for his majesty's protection, and he invited the king to head these troops, and defend himself against the usurpers. His Majesty accepted this offer, and great preparations were made for the royal reception. Hursook Roy, Perron's chief banker, was sent to Dehlee, to advance such money as his majesty might require. The 2nd and 3rd brigade from Hindostan, and the 4th from Oojeine, were ordered to Dehlee, and all independent powers were summoned by his majesty to that city, to defend the throne of Hindostan. All these measures were taken only a month before Lord Lake appeared before Alleeghur.

But the jealousies existing in the Mahratta councils overthrew every scheme. The generals with Sindea, most of whom were in the interest of Holcar or the English, particularly Ambajee, resolved to leave the brigades to be destroyed. Runjeet Singh of Lahore also determined against making any effort in Sindea's favour. In fact, there was no unity among the powers of Hindostan who had to oppose the English. Holcar, the Nagpore Rajah, and Sindea, all of whom promised to coalesce, never joined or worked in concert, and thus were destroyed singly. The regular brigades, unassisted by any of the Mahratta horse, and shamefully deserted by the French officers who had headed them, were also destroyed by themselves.

Perron, upon the arrival of Lord Lake at Alleeghur, retired to Mendoo, a large village five côs south of Coel, with his 5,000 horse; the rest of the large body he had assembled there all dispersed to their homes, or returned to join their respective chiefs. These 5,000 were placed by Perron under the command of Mr. Fleurea, with orders to go towards Cawnpore, destroying the country as they went. He himself went off to Agra, where his family was, and a

great part of his wealth, in precious stones and jewellery.

Lord Lake, on reaching Alleeghur proposed terms to the garrison, which Colonel Pedron * was inclined to accept, but the garrison putting themselves under command of Bajee Rao, a Bahadourea Rajepoot, confined the colonel, and resolved to defend the fort. This garrison was composed of a regular battalion, 800 strong, commanded by a native, named Meer Shadut Allee,

* Perron had placed the utmost confidence in this officer, and relied on his defending to the last a fortress which, as was the case with Alleeghur, had been fortified with all the skill and pains which science could bestow upon it; and the following letter, which he wrote to Pedron, shows both the importance he attached to the defence, and his confidence that it would be maintained:—"You will have received," he says, "the answer you are to make to the propositions of General Lake. I never could have believed that for a moment you could have thought of a capitulation. Remember, you are a Frenchman; and let no action of yours tarnish the character of your nation. I hope, in a few days, to send back the English general as fast or faster than he came; make yourself easy on this subject. Either the Emperor's army or that of General Lake's shall find a grave before the fort of Alleeghur. Do your duty, and defend the fort while one stone remains upon another. Once more—remember your nation; the eyes of millions are fixed upon you." It is known how Pedron fulfilled the expectations of his commander.

1,000 Bahadourea Rajepoots, 500 Mewattees, and about the same number of recruits, a rissalah of horse, and 200 Golundauz. The Bahadourea Rajepoots with Bajee Rao had charge of the gate and outer fort, and the rest were all in the inner chowbourgee.

On our second visit to Lord Lake, I was offered the command of 2,000 horse; but I refused it, declaring that I never would fight against Sindea. On the 4th of September 1803, Lord Lake assaulted the fort with 500 Europeans of the 76th, and two and a half battalions of Sepoys. They started from camp about two hours before daybreak, and reached the place a little before dawn. A piquet of fifty men, with a 6-pounder, had been stationed, by Bajee Rao, about fifty yards from the fort, at whom this handful of heroes ran like lions. The piquets immediately ran away to the wicket, and got in. The assaulting party attempted to get in along with them, but were shut out. Instead, however, of retreating, these brave fellows stood upon the goonjus for a full hour, under one of the heaviest fires of musketry and great guns I have seen, and only at sunrise did they fall back about a hundred yards; on which the brave Lord Lake,

who was standing near Perron's house, at one of his batteries, called out, "They run!" They were rallied, however, by some of their gallant officers, and in going back they carried with them the Mahratta gun. I was close by Lord Lake, and saw and heard everything that passed. The God of heaven certainly looked down upon these noble fellows, for with two shots they blew open half the gate, and, giving three shouts, they rushed in. The Rajepoots stood their ground like brave soldiers, and from the first to the second gate the fight was desperately maintained on both sides, and the carnage very great.

As soon as he heard the shout, the countenance of Lord Lake changed from anxiety to joy, and he called out, with the greatest delight, "The fort is ours"; and turning to me, asked what I thought of European fighting? I replied that no forts in Hindostan could stand against him. Then spurring his horse, he galloped to the gate. But when he saw his heroes lying thick there, the tears came to his eyes. "It is the fate of good soldiers!" he said; and turning round, he galloped back to the camp, and gave up the fort to plunder. I must here declare that the courage displayed by the 76th surpassed all I had

ever seen, and every idea I had formed of soldiering.

The inner garrison immediately threw down their arms, and began to fly in all quarters. A vast amount of plunder was taken by the troops.*

* The storm of Alleeghur is so remarkable a feat of military daring that we cannot refrain from adding to Skinner's spirited sketch a somewhat more particular account of this most gallant affair:—"Much dependence," says Mr. Grant Duff, "was placed on this fortress. It is very strong, situated on a plain surrounded by swamps, having a good glacis. It was well garrisoned, fully provided with cannon, ammunition, and provisions, and the Mahrattas expected, as they had a right to expect, that it would sustain a long siege. The only passage into the fort was by a narrow causeway across the ditch, for which the French commandant, by gross neglect, had omitted to substitute a drawbridge. General Lake, apprised of this circumstance, determined to hazard an attack by the gateway; and Mr. Lucan, a British subject, one of the officers who had come over from Sindea's service, offered to conduct the storming party. Break of day, on the 4th of September, was the time appointed for the purpose: on the firing of the morning gun, the party, who had been lying for some time within four hundred yards of the gate, immediately advanced; and Colonel Monson pushed forward, at the head of the flank companies of the 76th, in hopes of being able to enter the fort with a party of the enemy that had been stationed outside, behind a breastwork. This had been abandoned, however, and the gate closed, while the entrance was raked by two or three guns, and flanked by the bastions,

As I was returning to the town I saw a European passing through the avenue with a bag of dollars on his shoulders; he was attacked by two native troopers, who sought to deprive him of what he had

which poured upon it a most destructive fire of grape. Scaling-ladders were instantly applied to the walls, and Major MacLeod, of the 76th, with the Grenadiers, attempted to mount; but an impassable row of pikemen above prevented their succeeding. A six-pounder now was brought up to blow open the gate, but it failed of effect; a twelve-pounder was then procured, after some time, but four or five shots were required before the gate would yield; and during this space of twenty minutes the storming party was exposed to a raking fire of musketry and grape from the great guns and wall-pieces. The enemy even came down the scaling-ladders to fight their assailants hand to hand;—here was the principal loss, and here was the most critical point, but nothing could appal the determined spirit of the British troops, who, as soon as the first gate was blown open, advanced, round a circular bastion, loopholed for muskets, to a second gate, which was easily forced. They then had to run along a narrow causeway, constantly exposed to the same raking fire; but succeeded in entering a third gate, at the end of it, along with the fugitives. But at the fourth gate, which led into the body of the place, they were again stopped, under a tremendous fire, until the 12-pounder could again be brought up. This, however, failed, so strong were the fastenings of this last gate; and again was the situation of the party most critical, when, most fortunately, Major MacLeod succeeded in forcing the wicket, through which he was followed by the Grenadiers.

bought so dearly. When he found that blows would not keep the fellows off, he just took and tore the bag, and scattered the cash. The rascals believing their booty thus secure, began to gather them up, upon which he took his gun, shot the one and bayoneted the other; then coolly taking off his jacket, he fixed a knot upon the sleeves, and filling them with the dollars, threw it across his shoulders. He next loaded his gun, and seeing me, called out to me to come near; when I came he offered me fifty dollars if I would escort him to camp. To this I agreed, and went with him to the party that was in charge of Pedron, which was about two hundred yards from us, and here he tendered me the dollars. I, of

The rampart was mounted, opposition gradually ceased, and the British troops—by a happy combination of indefatigable courage and good fortune—found themselves masters of the supposed-impregnable fortress of Alleeghur, after a single morning's bloody work: it was indeed bloody,—223 officers and men were killed and wounded of the British; six officers of the 76th alone being among the first; under the circumstances, it is wonderful that the loss was not still more severe. The loss of the Mahrattas was far more severe, 2,000 being killed, besides those drowned or smothered in the ditch, in their endeavours to escape: amongst the slain was the brave Bajee Rao, the Rajepoot commander of the place.

course, refused to take them; on which he thanked me, and I returned to the town. I am sorry to add, that the gate by which these gallant fellows entered was pointed out to them by Lieutenant Lucan, an Irishman, and an officer in the Mahratta service, who received for the job 24,000 rupees, and a commission in H. M.'s 76th.

On the 25th, intelligence reached Lord Lake that Fleurea had surprised Colonel Cunningham, at Shekoabad, and compelled him to sign a capitulation, by which he bound himself and party, consisting of five companies, not to carry arms against Sindea during the war; in consideration of which they were permitted to retire with their arms to Futtighur or Cawnpore. It appeared that these five companies had defended themselves for twenty-four hours against 5,000 horse, and did not give in until their ammunition was expended. All the officers were wounded, and a great number of the men killed; while Fleurea, on his side, lost seven of his best rissaldars, and about 500 of his men.

As soon as Lord Lake was informed of the direction which Fleurea had taken, he detached some regiments of cavalry in pursuit. But information of the fall of Alleeghur having that very

day reached Fleurea, and his men refusing to believe it had been taken by assault, but maintaining that it was treacherously surrendered by Perron, they immediately took the way to Agra, where they expected to find that general. He had, however, removed with his family and effects to Muttra, taking with him his body-guard of 800 horsemen, mounted from his own stable, and 500 Mewattees; and here Fleurea's horse joined him.

In the mean time, Mons. Bourquoin got up an intrigue at Dehlee, which occasioned no small confusion. Asserting that Perron had turned traitor, and had gone over to the English, he invited the troops at Dehlee to make him their commander, and that he would lead them on to glory. Having succeeded in persuading them to agree to this proposal, he next stirred up a mutiny in the 2nd brigade, and got them to place Mons. Zellon, their commander, along with all their officers, in arrest, under fixed bayonets. In vain did M. Zellon, who was an honest man, assure them that Bourquoin's assertions were false, that Perron had not gone over to the English, and that Bourquoin was only misleading them; all was fruitless, they would not listen to him. Bour-

quoin then called upon the king, and procured from him a khilut of investiture as commander-in-chief of Perron's infantry. His next step was to demand from Mr. Drugeon, the governor of Dehlee, all the public treasure. This Drugeon refused, and his garrison of 5,000 men proving stanch, he turned Bourquoin out of the fort, and told the king that he would obey no one until he should hear from Perron.

Bourquoin immediately laid siege to the fort with his brigade, and placed eight battering guns at one of the bastions near the Rajghaut; seized Hirsook Roy, and took from him some lakhs of rupees. The siege lasted two days, during which he levelled the bastion to the ground; and then the king begged of him to suspend operations, and that he would contrive to make Drugeon obey his orders.

Not content with this, Bourquoin wrote to the sowars of the cavalry at Muttra, informing them that Perron was a traitor, and enjoining them to seize him. Perron suspected that this was going on, and in order to save himself he had recourse to a stratagem. Mustering the cavalry, he complained to them of Bourquoin's conduct, assured them of the falsehood of all his assertions,

and declared he would immediately go and punish him for his treachery. He assured them that if they would follow him faithfully, he would drive this Lord Lake out of the Doab; and distributing three lakhs of rupees amongst the rissaldars for their sowars, declared he would that evening cross the Jumna with his body-guard; while they, taking money for their expenses from their rissaldars, should follow in the morning.

The rissaldars finding so much money in their hands, began to quarrel about the division of it, while Perron crossed in the evening with his body-guard. When it became dark, he gave the Mewattees five thousand rupees, desiring them to keep all the boats in their own hands during the night, and in the morning give them to the Sowars, while he should march on about five côs. But he lost no time in sending an express to Lord Lake, to say he had resigned Sindea's service, and requesting that he would receive and assign him quarters; while, instead of five, he made a march of twenty côs during the night, and reached Sasnee in the morning.

No sooner did the Sowars discover that Perron had fled, than their faith in Bourquoin returned, and, believing him a true man, they all marched

for Dehlee to join him. In the mean time, Lord Lake, having sent an officer, Captain Brownigg, to escort Perron to Lucknow, and leaving a battalion to garrison the fort of Alleeghur, marched on the 7th September towards Dehlee. On hearing this, Bourquoin endeavoured to persuade the troops to march with him to Hurriana. This opened their eyes, and finding that he was as bad as Perron, they put him in confinement, and one of the native commandants, named Surwur Khan, taking the command, twelve battalions from both the brigades crossed the Jumna, with 100 pieces of cannon and all the horse, amounting to 5,000 or 6,000 men.

This force came up with Lord Lake on the 9th of September at Suddur ka Serai, and so badly off for information was the British troops, that the sepoys were cooking their dinner on the banks of the Hindun river, when they perceived a large body of Bourquoin's cavalry coming up. These were beaten on the 10th; but the plan and circumstances of the battle of Dehlee* are so well

* In this memorable battle 4,500 British troops had to encounter 19,000 of the enemy, of whom only 6,000 were cavalry, supported by a park of sixty-eight cannon, all admirably served, and all in an excellent position. The British troops were wearied with a long march, and roused up

known, that I need not describe it. About 2,000 men made good their retreat to Tupple, and crossed the Jumna, carrying off four pieces of cannon, the rest were all cut up by the British cavalry. Lord Lake arrived at Dehlee with the army, and was very kindly received by the king, who had long suffered from the Mahratta reign. Bourquoin and all the Frenchmen gave themselves up, and the remains of the brigade made good their retreat to Agra, where they were joined by the 4th brigade, the commander of which, Chevalier Dudernaig, with all the French officers, escaped and joined Colonel Vandeleur at Muttra.

Eight rissalahs of Perron's horse came over to Lord Lake at Dehlee, and were taken into the

to fight while cooking their untasted food. It was one steady but desperate charge of the bayonet against the cannon—for the men, though falling in scores, never took their musket from their shoulders till within 100 paces of the enemy, when orders were given for the charge. The British loss was 400 killed and wounded; that of the enemy not less than 3,000, besides those drowned in the Jumna. Both Lord Lake and his son had horses shot under them; and the same order pervaded all ranks and classes of the troops. Dehlee, of course, was abandoned by the enemy, and Bourquoin and many of his officers surrendered themselves immediately after the action.

British service, and being asked to choose one of their own officers as their commander, they named me. Lord Lake, on my second visit, had offered me the command of 2,000 horse, but I declined it, declaring that I would never carry arms against Sindea. At Coel, where I was left during Lord Lake's march to Dehlee, proclamation was made to all the British and country-born officers, late of Sindea's, informing us that we should meet with punishment, if we were found again in arms against the British; but that whoever chose to accept and serve, should receive the same pay he had from Perron; and now, my old comrades having asked for me, I received a letter from Lord Lake appointing me to the command, with a promise that I should not be employed against Sindea, but that my duty should be to keep the road from Alleeghur to Dehlee clear of all marauders. I accordingly joined my corps at Secundra, having arranged that Lieutenant Scott should be appointed my second in command.

When Lord Lake arrived at Secundra, my brother Robert was sent from the Begum Sumroo to make terms for her. His lordship immediately sent him back with a treaty, and directions to stand fast, and not to move from Sirdhana, in

which case she should be treated favourably by the British government.

The name of this lady and of her husband, the notorious Sumroo, have been several times mentioned, and as they were personages of some celebrity, and who played no inconsiderable part in the changing scenes of those days in India, it may be proper to explain rather more at large who they were and what they did.

CHAPTER X.

Sumroo, or Sombre, his origin and military career—Enters Meer Cossim's service—Puts to death the English at Patna—Deserts to Shujah-u-Dowlut—His methods of securing arrears of pay—His character—The Begum Sumroo—Her origin and history—Gallantly supports the Moghul Emperor—Submits to Lord Lake—His characteristic reception of her—Her character and appearance—Employment of Skinner's corps by Lord Lake—Against Madhoo Rao Falkea—He defeats that chief—Forces him to surrender Mallaghur—Agra taken by Lord Lake—Murder of British officers by Holcar—Battle of Lasswarrie—War with Holcar—Skinner sent with his corps against the Sikhs—They are surprised, defeated, and forced into terms of submission to the British authority—Skinner receives the thanks of Lord Lake.

WALTER REINEHARD was a native of the Electorate of Treves,* who came out to India as a car-

* The greater part of these details are to be found in Scott's History of the Dekhan and of Bengal; the Seir Mootaquereen; and Frânklin's Shah Allum and History of George Thomas. See also Major Polier's Letter in the Asiatic Annual Register for 1800.

penter in the French sea service; but having served for some time in the south of India, he came to Bengal, where he enlisted in one of the companies of Europeans employed at Calcutta. Deserting from thence after a few days, he repaired to Chandernagore, and became a sergeant once more in the French service. Here, however, he did not continue long; and flying to the upper provinces, he became a private trooper in the cavalry of Sufder Jung, the father of Shujah-u-Dowlut, the Nawab Vizier of Oude. But this service seems not to have suited him either; for he soon left it, and he is next heard of in 1760 as in that of the rebel Foujedar of Purnea, Khadum Hoosseen Khan; but this officer having been expelled from Bengal, Sumroo left him, and took service with Gregory, an Armenian, at that time high in favour with Meer Cossim, the Nawab of Bengal, and distinguished by the name of Goorgeen Khan. From this person, Sumroo received command of a battalion of sepoys, and to this was soon after added another conferred by the Nawab himself.

It was at this time, when Meer Cossim, furious and half disordered in his mind, at the bad success of his arms against the English, on hearing of the

taking by them of Monghir, where he had deposited much of his stores and treasure, ordered Sumroo to put to death all the English prisoners that had been taken some time previous at Patna, an order which the native historians state his having obeyed with all alacrity.

When Meer Cossim's affairs appeared desperate, Sumroo, we learn, came with his troops, and surrounding the tents of Meer Cossim, clamorously demanded their pay. This the Nawab told him he had not to give, that he must now discharge him, but that he must deliver over the arms and cannon to the officer of his arsenal. Sumroo insolently replied, that they now belonged to those who possessed them, and deserted from him, with all his corps, to the service of Shujah-u-Dowlut, who had gained him by bribery. But upon the defeat of that prince at Buxar, where his force was utterly broken, Sumroo was entrusted with the care of the Begum's, and he remained in the Nawab Vizier's service until he made peace with the English. One of the conditions of this peace, which, however, never was fulfilled, was that Meer Cossim and Sumroo should both be given up. But, however unprincipled or easy of conscience the Vizier might be,

the giving up a prince who had taken refuge with him, and whose cause he had pledged himself to support, was too flagrant a breach of faith and hospitality, even in those times, to be committed without injury to character; and the Vizier, in reply to the demand, declined the actual treachery, but offered to let the unhappy Meer Cossim, plundered as he had been,* escape, when they might follow and seize him, if they pleased. As for Sumroo, he was, he remarked, at the head of an armed force, and it might not be easy to seize him; but that, if they pleased, he would invite him to an entertainment, and have him put to death, in the presence of any Englishman they might choose to send as a witness of the act, an offer which did not at all suit with English ideas.

In regard to Meer Cossim, the wretched man escaped, with some of his family and a few friends, into the Rohilla country, whither he had contrived to send some funds previous to being plundered; he died some time afterwards at an obscure village

* It is asserted that much of this plunder remained in Sumroo's hands, and was the means by which he was enabled to hold his troops together, and the foundation of his future success.

near Dehlee, and after many intrigues; "unlamented," says the native historian, "even by his own family." Sumroo, not much more disposed to trust the Vizier, secured his arrears of pay, by surrounding the Begums and Zenana of that prince in Rohilcunda, and forcing at last his dues from them, after which he retired to Agra with his corps, and entered the service of Jowahir Rajah, son of Sooruj Mall, the Jhat prince of Bhurtpore,* where he remained but a short time, and then took service with the Rajah of Jeypore. But on a remonstrance from the English authorities, now formidable in all the northern provinces, he was dismissed by that prince; and after another short service with the Jhats, he left them finally, and came to Dehlee. There he was first entertained by the minister Abdulahud Khan, but discharged after four months, from fear of offending the English. He was, however, immediately retained by Nujjuff Khan Zulficar-u-Dowlut, at that time supreme at Dehlee, who, while reducing the Jhats to obedience, had probably become aware of Sumroo's value. It was he who assigned to the fortunate adventurer, the purgunnah of

* Deeg, and many other strong places, belonged to the Jhat Rajah.

Serdhanah,* in Jeydad, for the maintenance of his corps, and in the service of this nobleman Sumroo remained until he died, in the year 1778.

Sumroo appears to have been a man whose evil propensities far outweighed the good; he was stern and bloody-minded, in no degree remarkable for fidelity or devotion to his employers, and though we cannot imagine him void of those qualities which attach the soldiery to their officer, we can see little in his career to indicate anything more than the hard, unscrupulous, and reckless, though bold, military adventurer. His character and disposition seem typified by the sobriquet, which he received from his European companions, of *Sombre*, transformed by the natives into Sumroo.†

This man, at some period of his life not exactly known, became attached to the female afterwards known as Begum‡ Sumroo. There are various

* Valued at six lakhs of rupees a year, but by the Begum's good management increased to ten.

† He is said to have despised show, dressing in the plain Moghul garb, and never disowning his low origin: one of his most marked traits is a cautious prudence, which at length amounted to a suspicious jealousy, that rendered his life entirely a burthen.

‡ Begum, a princess, or wife of a beg or noble, from her holding the little principality of Serdhanah.

origins attributed to her. Franklin says she was the daughter of a decayed Moghul noble. The natives, with more probability of correctness, say she was a Cashmerian dancing girl whose personal charms first attracted him, and whose talents and sound judgment became so valuable to him in the sequel, as to gain a great ascendancy over him. Whether he married her or not is uncertain, but she was regarded as his wife, and succeeded at his death to his corps and his jaedad,—the former having been increased by the command of a body of Moghul horse, assigned to him by Nujjuff Khan. By means of her uncommon ability and discretion, united to a masculine firmness and intrepidity, and aided by this force, the regular portion of which, according to Franklin, amounted to five battalions of sepoys, about 200 Europeans, officers and artillerists, and forty pieces of cannon, she managed to preserve her country nearly unmolested, and her authority generally unimpaired, during a period of surrounding storm and tempest, which shook several great powers from their thrones. The Moghul court supported her while it could; and Sindea had so high an opinion of her capacity, that he not only added to her possessions some lands south-west of the Jumna, but,

while engaged in war with Purtaub Sing of Jeypore, he intrusted the western frontier to her protection, by stationing her force at Paneeput.*

To the court of Dehlee she always adhered with fidelity, and showed her attachment strongly in the hour of need during Gholaum Kawdir's atrocious attack upon his sovereign in his own palace at Dehlee. Rejecting contemptuously that powerful miscreant's offer of marriage and equality of power, the Begum repaired to the palace with all her force, resolved to defend her sovereign so far as she might be able. In answer to a summons to quit the city on pain of immediate hostilities, she erected a battery in aid of the fort, and replied from it to the heavy cannonade of Gholaum Kawdir; and had the Moghul troops seconded hers with equal spirit, the Rohilla would

* It is a remarkable thing, and much to the credit of the Begum's troops, that some four or five of her battalions were the only part of Sindea's army that went off unbroken from the field of Assaye: they were charged by our cavalry towards the close of the day, but without effect; Colonel Maxwell, who commanded, being killed in the charge by a grape-shot. The people in the Dekhan, who knew the Begum by reputation, believed her to be a witch, who destroyed her enemies by throwing her *chadir* at them; the word *chadir* meaning "chain-shot" as well as a "woman's veil."

have been forced to retire. But treachery prevailed, and her efforts were rendered vain.

Soon after this, the Shah, by the advice of his ministers, made a progress through the neighbouring districts, in order to reduce certain rebels to order, and commenced operations against Nujjuff Koolee Khan, a proud refractory noble, who held the strong fort of Goculghur. Certain officers of the royal army, having neglected their duty and their watch, were surprised by the enemy in a sortie, which threw the whole of the royal troops into a dangerous state of confusion. The Begum, who was encamped near, came again to his assistance; and, ordering up three battalions of her sepoys, with a gun, under command of a European,* and accompanying them herself in her palankeen, she commenced a fire of grape and musketry — which being unexpected, was the more alarming—the king's troops rallied, and Nujjuff Koolee Khan was forced to retire, and then to humble himself to his sovereign. All agreed that the royal arms were saved from disgrace by the Begum's presence of mind; and the Shah himself, in full durbar, honoured her with a

* It was George Thomas, who used to tell the story himself.

magnificent khilut, and called her "his most beloved daughter," in addition to her various other titles.

Her power, however, no more than her good will, was able to save her sovereign from the misery and distress which were poured on his devoted head by the Rohilla chief and his traitor nobles, —and we hear little more of her till about the year 1795, when those inclinations which ought to have ceased their sway in the heart of a well advanced and sound-headed woman, as she certainly was on most occasions, betrayed her into a measure which had nearly proved fatal to her. Amongst the principal European officers of her army, we have seen that George Thomas at one time held a conspicuous place, and that he had been superseded in his influence and command by a rival. This rival appears to have been an officer named Levasso, or Le Vaissaux,—said by Mr. Franklin to have been a German* adventurer, for whom she is understood to have conceived an attachment—and whom, contrary to the advice of her friends, and that of the king himself, who like them predicted the downfall of her authority—and contrary, above all, to her

* He must have been French.

usual prudence, she married. This man, though not deficient in abilities, was stern and haughty, and soon disgusted both officers and soldiers—the former more particularly, from procuring the disgrace of one Legois, an officer, so called from being a native of Liege, and to whom the soldiery had been long attached. The matter terminated in a mutiny, or rather conspiracy, which they formed to depose both the Begum and her husband, and to place in command of the troops, and on the "musnud" of Serdhanah, a son of Sumroo, though not by the Begum, Zaffer Yab Khan, who at the time resided at Dehlee. It was not at once that the Zaffer Yab Khan agreed to accept the dangerous honour; for he had a very serious dread of the ability and intrigues of his mother-in-law. But at last he did consent; and either so unexpected or so sweeping appears to have been the revolt, that we find the Begum and her husband at once preparing for flight, and proceeding towards the Ganges, in order to seek refuge in Oude. They were overtaken, however, by a party of cavalry sent by Zaffer Yab Khan especially to intercept them,—and they were surrounded, at the village of Kerwah, in the Begum's jagheer, only four miles from Serdhanah.

A free pardon was proclaimed by the usurper to her few attendants, provided they would lay down their arms, and give up the Begum and her husband—and great confusion ensued. The infantry surrounded her palankeen, demanding her to surrender; while the cavalry did the same to her husband. From whatever motive, the Begum drew her poniard, and, striking it across her breast, the blood gushed out, though the wound was a mere scratch. On hearing the tumult and the cries for assistance, her husband called out to know what it meant. They told him the Begum had killed herself,—twice again he repeated the question, and, receiving twice the same reply, he very deliberately drew a pistol, put it to his mouth, and shot himself, and immediately fell from his horse. "The villains," says Mr. Thomas, who tells the story, "who the preceding day had styled themselves his slaves, now committed every act of insult and indignity on his corpse.

The motive of the Begum in this strange proceeding is not very clear. It is said by some that, before her husband and she left Serdhanah, they made an agreement, in case of accident, that neither should survive the other: and Levasso's suicide may be held to give this some colour. It

is not impossible, if any such compact had been entered into, that the Begum, a selfish and artful woman, seeing in what extremities her imprudent marriage had involved her, might choose this way to relieve herself of her self-imposed fetters. However this may be, she was conducted back to Serdhanah as a prisoner, and Zaffer Yab Khan assumed the government of her jagheer.

Like many other persons, however, the Begum in her adversity recollected those who had been her true friends in prosperity, and among the first to whom she applied was George Thomas. To him she wrote in piteous terms, declaring her apprehensions even from poison or the dagger,—affirming that her only dependence was on him, and offering any terms, either to him or to the Mahrattas, if, through his intervention, they would come and reinstate her in her jagheer.

Thomas, as we have already seen, like a true cavalier, was not slow to listen to his former mistress's woes. He generously laid aside ancient animosities, and bribed Bappoo Sindea to move upon Serdhanah, and setting on foot a negociation to corrupt Zaffer Yab Khan's men—a species of diplomatic warfare never omitted in Indian disputes—he published that no mercy would be

extended to those who continued to resist the Begum's authority. The Begum was reinstated accordingly, and Zaffer Yab confined. But such is the fickleness of scoundrels like these, that before Thomas could reach the place, there was a counter-revolution. Zaffer Yab was set at large; and, seeing Mr. Thomas appear but slightly accompanied, he ordered an attack upon him and his fifty sowars. Fortunately, there were 400 more just behind: this altered the case—the mutineers submitted—the Begum was fully reinstated—oaths of allegiance administered—and the unfortunate usurper, plundered and a prisoner, was conducted to Dehlee and there confined.

From this time we hear little of the Begum, save that she appears, as formerly stated, to have held her contingent ready at the Mahratta call, for guarding the frontier. And in 1799, especially, she accompanied their army to the Sikh country, returning from Paneeput to Serdhanah. The brilliant successes of the British arms, however, and the events of the Mahratta war, so convincingly proving the superiority of the English over the native power, was not to be overlooked by so shrewd an observer as the Begum. The overture made by that lady to Lord Lake, men-

tioned above, took place almost immediately after the battle of Dehlee, and it was not long before she came to pay her respects in person; upon which occasion an incident occurred of a curious and characteristic description. She arrived at head-quarters, it appears, just after dinner, and being carried in her palankeen at once to the reception tent, his lordship came out to meet and receive her. As the adhesion of every petty chieftain was, in those days, of consequence, Lord Lake was not a little pleased at the early demonstration of the Begum's loyalty; and being a little elevated by the wine which had just been drunk, he forgot the novel circumstance of its being a native female he was about to receive, instead of some well-bearded chief, so he gallantly advanced, and, to the utter dismay of her attendants, took her in his arms and kissed her. The mistake might have been awkward, but the lady's presence of mind put all right. Receiving courteously the proffered attention, she turned calmly round to her astonished attendants—"It is," said she, "the salute of a *padre* (or *priest*) to his daughter." The Begum professes Christianity, and thus the explanation was perfectly in character, though more experienced spectators

might have smiled at the appearance of the jolly red-coated clergyman, exhibited in the person of his lordship.

Since that time the Begum has lived much in habits of social courtesy and friendly intercourse with the English, receiving them at very handsome entertainments, and very frequently appearing at the residency table, where she freely participated in all the good things it afforded. Of her character and dispositions somewhat may be judged from what has been said above. Her best qualities were those of the head—her sound judgment, her shrewdness of observation, her prudence, and occasional fidelity to her trust—chiefly as exemplified in her conduct to the unfortunate Shah Allum. For those of the heart, we fear much cannot be said. She was cruel, unforgiving, relentless, deceitful, liberal only where self-interest required it, and courteous too often merely to hide enmity. One anecdote—it is given by Bishop Heber, and we believe is in the main correct—will serve to show something of her ruthless and implacable nature. A slave-girl had offended her—an affair, we believe, of jealousy. The poor creature was brought before her—a hole dug in the earth under the floor of the room, in which

she was buried alive — and, as if it had been a trifling occurrence, her mistress smoked her hookah unconcernedly on this living grave.

In her youth, the Begum must have been handsome — her features and person small and delicate, like most of the women of India; even when the writer knew her, in 1815-16, she had the remains of good looks, and a beautiful hand and arm, which she used to be rather proud of as she smoked her hookah. When the bishop saw her, in 1825, she was "a very little queer-looking old woman, with brilliant, wicked-looking eyes." She never had any children, but adopted several slave-girls as daughters, whom she bestowed as such upon her favourite officers. She died very wealthy, and her jagheer has reverted to the Company.

After settling matters at Dehlee, Lord Lake marched on the 24th of September with the army for Agra. He appointed Colonel Ochterlony Resident at Dehlee, with two battalions of the line as garrison; and ordering two Nujeeb battalions to be raised for its further protection, the command of which was given to two Mahratta officers, Lieutenant Birch receiving the one, and Lieutenant Woodwill the other.

I had been engaged for about a month in settling the country under my charge, which was much infested by petty robbers, when all of a sudden, Madhoo Rao Falkea, a Mahratta chief, who possessed Malaghur in jagheer, summoned me to quit the country. My reply was, that he must make his application to the British Resident at Dehlee, whose orders alone I could attend to. On the other side, Bappoo Sindea had approached Soonput, only twenty côs north of Dehlee, with 5,000 men, and five or six guns. To oppose this inroad, Birch was ordered off with both the Nujeeb battalions, and I was ordered to Dehlee. The same day I began to cross at Putpurgunge, news arrived that Bappoo had beaten Birch, and cut up both battalions. In the evening he arrived in Dehlee, safe himself, but accompanied by Lieutenant Woodwill wounded, and the few men who had escaped. Bappoo, after this exploit, went off to Kannund, his capital, fifty côs west of Dehlee. I was ordered back by Ochterlony, and on reaching Secundra, received information that Madhoo Rao was prepared to attack me, with a battalion consisting of 800 men, 500 horse, and two guns. Hearing this, I wrote to the Resident, and aware that he could not assist me with troops, requested

him to send me a couple of field-pieces, with which I would try a battle. His answer was that one of my countrymen had already lost four of the Company's guns, and he would not trust me with another; but that I was by no means to retreat.

Much hurt by this ill-natured remark, I resolved not to retreat, but rather to die; and on being again summoned by Madhoo, replied that I should not stir. His troops were led by a chief of his own, and Malaghur being only eight côs from Secundra, he came up to me about four in the morning. On becoming aware of his march, I caused my men, about 1,200 in number, to mount, and remained till sunrise drawn up in front of my camp.

Madhoo's general remained about a côs from me, and finding he would approach no further, I moved on towards him. When within reach, he fired a few rounds, on which I formed my men into two *gholes*,* and sending Lieutenant Scott with one on his left flank, took to the right myself, the enemy being drawn up in a line with his guns in the centre, and the cavalry in his rear. Both gholes attempted to turn his flanks,

* Dense bodies.

but the men behaved ill, and we were repulsed. I collected them and attempted to charge, but they deserted me. I passed between the guns with about fourteen men, and just as I did so, my horse was shot under me, by a matchlock ball, and one of the troopers carried me off behind him.

I then rejoined my party, harangued them and got them together again, mounted another charger, and brought my men a second time to the charge. Madhoo's infantry gave us a volley and then turned; we dashed in and cut them to pieces. The cavalry fled to Malaghur; we took their guns and gained a complete victory. Lieutenant Scott received eleven sabre cuts, and was not expected to recover, and we had 200 men killed and wounded. The battle was gained by great exertion, for my men, just entered the service, did not fight with zeal. I wrote an account of the whole affair to the Resident at Dehlee, begging him to send assistance for Lieutenant Scott, which request he immediately complied with, laying a dâk for him to that city. He also wrote me a public letter of thanks, and I received a very handsome one from Lord Lake, a few days afterwards, assuring me of his sense of my exer-

tions.* The Resident then ordered me to Dehlee, and directed me to try and get Madhoo Rao out of the fort of Malaghur, and away from the country, even at the expense of a lakh of rupees if required.

On my return to camp accordingly, I marched to Malaghur with my horse, and encamped at a place called Bagwallah, three côs to the north of the fort. There were in garrison with Madhoo,

* The following is the letter alluded to in the text :—

To Captain Skinner,

Sir,—The Commander-in-Chief has derived great satisfaction from the perusal of your letter of the 9th inst., communicating the defeat of Madhoo Row by the troops under your command.

His Excellency desires me to express his cordial thanks to you and Lieutenant Scott for your gallant conduct, and trusts the wounds which Lieutenant Scott has received will neither prove dangerous nor long deprive the service of the benefit of his exertions.

His Excellency desires you will signify to the native officers and men his entire approbation of their behaviour, and to assure them the bravery which they have shown on this occasion merits His Excellency's warmest praises, in testimony of which he has ordered the enclosed Persian letter to be addressed to them.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. Gerrard,
Adjutant-General.

Head-Quarters, Camp at Agra,
23rd Oct. 1803.

about 2,000 infantry, 300 sowars, and several guns.

I offered him terms, but he refused them with contempt, on which I commenced harassing him with my horse, cutting off all his supplies, and attacking his cavalry whenever I could meet them out of reach of cannon-shot. This was continued for fifteen days without effect, when I found out that all the forage in the fort consisted of two stacks of grass, which would last the horses about three months. These I resolved to destroy, if possible, and for this purpose agreed with a Goojur spy, who volunteered the service for 300 rupees. This man having some brethren in the fort, pretended to desert from me, and fled into the place, where he was well received. He returned in a week, after assuring me that he had done the business; upon inquiring how he had managed it, he told me he had put a slow match to each stack, an assertion which I was slow to believe at first, but in the course of twenty-four hours we saw them both on fire, on which I gave him the money agreed upon.

Three days after this the horse made offers to come over, but I refused to receive them alone. Several attempted to escape, but they were pur-

sued and put to death by my horse. At length Madhoo Rao sent a vakeel to make terms with me, and the following were proposed and accepted. The fort was to be given up, but all his private property was to be secured to him, except the guns and provisions, which were to be left, and the soldiers were permitted to march out with their arms. I told him also, that I should take him to the Resident at Dehlee, who I was sure would take him into the service.

The fort and the purgunnah, consisting of twenty-eight villages, were then given up and added to the Company's territory, and I marched Madhoo Rao with all his troops to Dehlee, where he was received very kindly by the Resident, and afterwards handsomely pensioned. His son, Ram Rao, was taken, with 600 sowars, into the British service. For my part, I received the thanks of the Resident and Lord Lake for this service, which, though it did not involve much hard fighting, was yet a duty of great fatigue and hard work. Of my force, there were never less than 300 or 400 men mounted day and night, and amongst them I constantly required to be. By this close blockade, the enemy was forced to come in within the month, and the cash I was autho-

rized to give for the surrender of the place was thus saved to the government.

Returning to camp, I resumed the measures which had been resorted to for settling the country, so that, in the course of a month, peace and tranquillity was restored from Alleeghur to the gates of Dehlee. Several mud forts were taken, and many parties of desperate marauders were destroyed; so that collections of revenue began to come in from the country. The Resident continued his kindness to me, rewarding me liberally for services well performed, and sending favourable reports of my conduct to head-quarters.

On the 4th of October, Lord Lake arrived at Agra. At Muttra he was joined by Colonel Vandeleur and Colonel Clarke, with a large detachment of troops. On the 10th October, he attacked the battalions of Perron's 3rd brigade, who were posted under the fort, and who defended the town bravely against the British. After the town had been carried, Lord Lake attacked the fort, towards the Taje. Hessing, who commanded the fort, was too rich a man to defend it well; he soon found means to dissatisfy the garrison, and the troops being offered service by the British, Colonel Hessing's five battalions,

under command of Major Brownrigg, first came over; and then, on the 17th October, the Colonel got the garrison to give up the place. For himself he made good terms, carrying off four or five lakhs of rupees, besides what he had in the Company's funds; and twenty-four lakhs of Sindea's cash were taken by the English commander.

This conduct of the Europeans in the Mahratta service totally ruined their own character, and led to the destruction of their comrades who had remained stanch to their master's cause. These were all seized and put to death, or tortured in prison until they died. Among the former was Colonel Vickers,* who, with seven of his officers, was beheaded in one day, by Holcar. Captain Mackenzie and Lieut. Langeman, with several others of Perron's brigades, were confined and

* This officer (a young half-caste) is the same who has already been noticed (p. 136) as having, by his great gallantry and steadiness, contributed much to Holcar's victory over the Peishwah's army at Poonah, on the 25th of October 1802, and whose conduct was at that time the theme of admiration amongst all military men. Vickers was one of three English officers in Holcar's service, who, upon signifying that they could not carry arms against the English, and must leave his service, were seized and put to death, under circumstances of great barbarity; this will be further adverted to hereafter.

tortured at Gwalior; others perished in the service of different petty rajahs; while all those traitors, who were the cause of their deaths, were well treated by Lord Lake, and suffered to go whither they chose.

Surwar Khan, with fourteen battalions and 100 pieces of cannon, still kept in a body; but he could get no Mahratta chiefs to join him. Several tempting offers were make by Lord Lake, both to himself and his troops, but he would not listen to them, but marched from Futtehpore Seekree to Bhurtpore to seek protection from the Rajah. This, however, was refused, so he prevailed upon a Mahratta pundit to join him with 4,000 or 5,000 horse, and they commenced their march towards the Mewat hills. Lord Lake, after settling matters at Agra, marched in pursuit of these faithful but unfortunate men, who, deprived of their officers, were commanded only by natives, assisted by a few European and country-born gunners among the artillery.

They were overtaken at the pass of Lasswarrie, on the morning of the 1st November, by Lord Lake, with his cavalry, who attacked the rear-guard of four battalions, 1,000 horse, and twenty guns. The contest was severe. A regiment or

two of the British cavalry made its way through some of the Mahratta battalions; but though they put them into confusion, they could not destroy them, and British and Mahrattas got into a mess together. The cavalry charged repeatedly up to the very bayonets, but could not penetrate them, until the main body, which had marched in the morning, hearing the cannonade, returned and joined their rear-guard; on which the British cavalry retired, with a severe loss, particularly in officers and Europeans.

Surwar Khan now took up a position, determined to fight it out. He drew up the remains of the 2nd and 3rd brigade upon the right; and placed the 4th brigade, which, not having yet suffered, was complete, upon the left. The cavalry was stationed in the rear, a small tank of water was in front, and the flanks were each supported by villages, having in front long chopper grass. Had he cut the brind, or dam, of the water-tank, he might have saved himself a few days longer; but fate had decreed otherwise. The British infantry came up about two o'clock, and after refreshing themselves a little, their brave commander led them to the attack. The

contest was fierce and firmly disputed, as all who were there know full well. Again did the heroes of the 76th distinguish themselves, doing credit to their nation; and so also did the 12th sepoy infantry. Lord Lake's son was wounded, and his lordship had two horses killed under him. On the British side the loss was great, but the remains of Perron's infantry was this day totally destroyed.

As Lord Lake was returning from the battle, some of the Europeans cheered him. He took off his hat and thanked them, but told them to despise death as these brave fellows had done, pointing to the Mahrattas, who were lying thick around their guns. All of these guns were captured, with several thousand prisoners, besides killed and wounded, the number of which on the Mahratta side was very great—but it never was properly ascertained, as I believe the field was never cleared, and the poor fellows were left to the wild beasts.

Lord Lake, after sending the captured guns to Agra, marched towards Jeypore, from whence some correspondence took place with Holcar; and, in consequence of some threatening letters from that chief, Colonel Monson, with a large

detachment, including Bappoo Sindea and the Baraitch horse, and 2,000 irregular horse under Lucan, was ordered to march towards his capital; while Colonel Murray, of the Bombay establishment, was directed to march from Guzzrat to co-operate with Monson. The army then, after taking Rampoorah, marched to Agra, and broke up on the 7th June, Lord Lake and the Europeans moving on to Cawnpore.

At this period, intelligence being received that a considerable body of Sikhs had assembled on the bank of the Jumna, opposite to Saharunpore, where Colonel Burn then was, I was directed to join him with all expedition. While on my way, I received orders to proceed and assist Captain Birch, formerly of the Mahratta service, but now commanding a battalion of Nujeebs, who had been pushed on to the banks of the Jumna, with instructions to prevent the Sikhs from crossing, and had taken up a position at one of the fordable ghauts. On my arrival, I perceived a numerous body of Sikhs upon the opposite side; and, after reconnoitring their position, and consulting with Captain Birch, I suggested that, if he would occupy their attention from his position, I would cross the river with my horse at some other

fordable ghaut in the vicinity, and take them by surprise.

This was effected about three in the morning, about five côs below; and, having come up before daybreak, I succeeded in completely surprising them. The result was, that the party, consisting of about 5,000 horse, was totally dispersed, with the loss of 400 men and two surdars killed, and about 100 horses taken. On our side we had about 100 men and horses killed and wounded —my own horse having been shot under me.

In a month afterwards, I prevailed on the Sikh chieftains to accompany me to Colonel Burn, with whom they entered into terms. The chieftains who came in on this occasion, were as follows:—Shere Sing, of Boorea; Doolcha Sing, an owner of several villages; Goordut Sing, of Ludwah; and several other commanders of bodies of 500 men each. For this service I received public thanks from the Resident of Dehlee; and from his excellency, Lord Lake,* as also from

* Sir,—I have had the honour to lay your letter of the 27th and 28th ult. before the Commander-in-Chief. His Excellency has perused with peculiar satisfaction your report of the successful operations of the detachment under the command of Captain Skinner. The Commander-in-Chief has on former occasions remarked the zeal and

Colonel Burn, with whom I continued six months, to his perfect satisfaction.

spirit evinced by Captain Skinner, and, in the present instance, the judgment, decision, and promptitude which he has displayed calls for his fullest approbation. His Excellency desires you will signify to Captain Skinner his cordial thanks for the ability, skill, and courage he has shown; and to Lieutenant Woodville, and officers and men who were employed on this occasion, his thanks and approbation of their steady and gallant behaviour.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. GERRARD,
Adjutant-General.

Head-Quarters, Bhohany, 2nd April 1804.

To Lieut.-Col. BURN,
Commanding a Detachment.

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